THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Social Exclusion and Discourses of Literacy and Physical Activity (post -16) in Scotland

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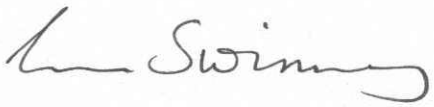
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

2012

Declaration

I, Ann Swinney, hereby certify that this doctoral thesis has been written by me, that it is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature: 

Date: 18th September 2012

Acknowledgements

My thanks to

the practitioners who willingly participated in my research,

my supervisor Lyn Tett for her guidance and constructive feedback,

friends and colleagues who have given their encouragement during the last six years,

my family for all their support

and especially Kevin, Patrick, Michael and Mum.

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Abstract

In European, UK and Scottish policy social exclusion has been the main discourse of poverty and disadvantage for at least the last sixteen years. However social exclusion is a contested term and there is limited consensus about its nature and definition. Adult physical activity and adult literacy provision have been identified in policy as having a role in addressing social exclusion and so this study explored understandings of social exclusion in policy and in practitioners' discourses about their practice in both these types of provision.

I undertook an analysis of Scottish policy texts relating to social exclusion, literacy and physical activity. This showed that policy discourse about social exclusion had evolved between 1999 and 2011 from a combative to a more enabling style. It also showed an increasingly overt individualistic economic discourse established as the underpinning rationale for policy intervention.

I then undertook a series of semi-structured interviews with nine literacy practitioners and seven physical activity practitioners. Using an approach informed by Critical Discourse Analysis I identified themes in the data. Practitioners' narratives were analysed in reference to a typology, RED, MUD and SID, (Levitas, 2005) which describes the different ways social exclusion is understood in the UK. These are respectively, a redistributive discourse (RED) which links social exclusion to poverty, a discourse that deploys cultural explanations of social exclusion (MUD) and a discourse which analyses social exclusion in relation to the labour market (SID). The study indicated that social exclusion was understood and interpreted by practitioners in different ways but that a theme of economic individualism framed their discursive practices and echoed policy. The study also revealed discursive links between policy texts and practitioners' discourses and these were more apparent in literacy practitioners' discourses than in physical activity practitioners' discourses. Similarities between both groups of practitioners were most evident in how they identified lack of confidence as a defining characteristic of people who experienced social exclusion and the central role of confidence building in their respective provision. My analysis showed that individual practitioners sometimes articulated simultaneously contradictory discourses about their practice however literacy practitioners' discourses considered together were more uniform than those of physical activity practitioners.

The findings illuminate the complicated and sometimes contradictory landscape of policy and practitioners' discourses about social exclusion and their practice. They draw attention to the delimitations and constraints on practitioners' discourses and to the need to support reflexivity in professional practice.

Introduction to the Study

Social Exclusion has been described as the dominant inequality discourse in Europe (Mathieson, Popay, Enoch, Escorel, Hernandez, Johnston and Rispel, 2008). The pervasiveness of the language of social exclusion in public discourse and government policy has been recognised (Levitas, 2005). In the UK, contemporary policy interest in social exclusion is driven by a concern to achieve social justice and reduce inequality in society (Scottish Government, 2007b). Government policy statements suggest economic development is perceived to be a fundamental component in strategic approaches which are intended to address social exclusion and draw the critique that policy interventions place an 'emphasis on paid work as a vehicle of inclusion' (Levitas, 2005:29).

Social exclusion, however, is a contested term and there is a large and growing body of literature which addresses its nature, cause and purpose. Social exclusion has been conceptualised as alternatively a state and a process (Lister, 2004); it has been described as a multi-dimensional phenomenon arising from a range of factors which interact to disadvantage individuals and communities (Room 1995; Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd and Patsios, 2007) and it has been variously said to be a term which distracts from fundamental issues of poverty in society and alternatively to illuminate the complex nature of social disadvantage (Estivill, 2003). Definitions of social exclusion, explanations about its causes, and the ways in which the term is used vary and, according to Levitas (2005), reflect differing analyses. However at the same time there seems to be a consensus in public and policy discourse that it is:

> …a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (Social Exclusion Unit, 1997:1).

Recently, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in its annual *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion Report* (Aldridge et al, 2011) analysed a wide range of issues it considered were related to social exclusion, including low income, worklessness and debt, ill-health, poor education and problems in communities.

In government policy links are made between education, health, employment, housing, and criminal justice to social exclusion. Social exclusion is not only embedded in views about poverty and disadvantage but also in views about social norms and attitudes about political and social organisation. Perhaps De Haan's view that social exclusion is best understood as 'a theoretical concept, a lens through which people look at reality and not reality itself' (2001:28) is a helpful metaphor to use when considering different discourses of social exclusion.

Adult literacy and adult physical activity provision are two aspects of public policy which are thought to address social exclusion and are the focus of this study. Like social exclusion, literacy and physical activity are philosophically and ideologically loaded concepts and thus subject to debate and controversy.

Adult literacy is framed predominately in a 'discourse of deficit' (Crowther et al., 2001:2) in which individuals are represented as having failed to acquire the pre-requisite skills to participate effectively in a market orientated and driven society. An alternative perspective proposes that literacy is socially and contextually defined and it 'dispenses with the idea that there is a single literacy that can be unproblematically taken for granted' (ibid). This analysis draws attention to power dimensions in the privileging of some forms of literacy over others and argues in favour of a pedagogy in which literacy learning is posited as a liberating project which equips participants to choose to challenge dominant values and practices or to conform. In Scotland literacy is currently defined as 'The ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners' (Scottish Executive, 2001). This definition is intended to reflect the different ways in which people use literacy in their lives.

Physical activity has been defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2004) as referring to movement of the body that requires energy. The definition encompasses all kinds of activities including routine chores and activities, walking and cycling as well as organised exercise such as sport and dance (Scottish Executive, 2003:13). Representations, however, in policy and popular discourse make a virtue out of participation in sport and other forms of organised exercise.

Certain forms of physical activity, as with literacy, are valorised over others and this is reflected in the way different social and discursive practices about physical activity dominate or are marginalised. In the UK the privileging of some forms of physical activity over others is maintained and sustained by the formal education system through its inclusion in the school curricula.

My interest in social exclusion, adult literacy and physical activity developed during a period when a range of powers were ceded from the Westminster Parliament to devolved administrations and governments across the U.K. In Scotland this resulted in the opening of the Scottish Parliament in July 1999. It has also coincided with a growing emphasis, by governments, on economic development, within the global market as a solution to poverty and social injustice. The Scottish Government has been voluble in its endorsement of this approach consistently identifying 'sustainable economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2007b:1) as the principal solution to social exclusion. Sustainable economic growth has been identified as the key to achieving social justice and, according to the First Minister (Scottish Government, 2007b:v), 'is the one central purpose to which all else in government is directed and contributes'. Individual learning, skills and well-being were identified as amongst the strategic government priorities and described as being 'internationally recognised to be critical to economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2007b:viii).

Adult literacy and physical activity provision are constituents of this Scottish policy agenda, in which education and greater health equality were identified as important factors in achieving the government's economic ambitions. In 2001 the Scottish Executive published an *Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* (ALNIS) in which it was unequivocal in its view that 'An inclusive society is also a literate society' (Scottish Executive, 2001:7). It emphasised that a strategy for adult literacy and numeracy 'must support the Scottish Executive's vision of a *Smart, Successful, Scotland* and an inclusive and socially just society' (Scottish Executive, 2001:13).

Adult literacy provision was specifically identified as occupying a place in this economic agenda because:

> It is widely recognised that basic literacy and numeracy skills are central to the prosperity and welfare of our society. Scotland needs to improve the skills of those currently at work in order to be able to compete in the world market. But literacy and numeracy affects more than just the country's prosperity and individual job prospects. People need to be literate and numerate in order to participate fully as members of society, as parents, and to lead fulfilling lives (Scottish Government, 2011:Web page).

Meanwhile, the government White Paper, *Towards a Healthier Scotland* linked improved health and social inclusion. It identified that increasing levels of physical activity played a key part in the improvement of health (Scottish Office, 1999b). The resulting physical activity strategy, *Let's Make Scotland more Active* (Scottish Executive, 2003b) reinforced the link between physical activity, health improvement and social inclusion.

Physical activity provision occupies a place within the economic agenda through its relationship to health improvement and equality. In brief poor health and health inequalities have been linked in policy discourse to poverty and social disadvantage (Scottish Government, 2008b). Physical activity is seen as playing a role in the economic agenda because of its potential to contribute to the improvement of health. In recent years the policy focus on health and health inequalities has been sharpened by the evidence of the damaging effects of smoking, obesity and physical inactivity, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged people in society. Poor health and health inequality have been recognised as impacting negatively on people's ability to participate fully in the 'normal' activities of society including paid employment (Scottish Government 2008b). Improved health and greater health equality, it is argued, increases the capacity of individuals to access and sustain employment and enjoy the economic and social benefits employment is deemed to accrue at individual and societal levels. In particular reductions in absences from work due to ill-health and the direct costs to the NHS from treating a range of chronic conditions are seen as important impacts. Physical activity provision therefore is perceived to have the potential to impact economic objectives.

The catalyst for this study is my professional interests as a literacy practitioner and my concern to contribute to a knowledge gap. In the course of my practice it had

become apparent to me that a common language of social exclusion masked a diversity of political and pedagogical perspectives in adult literacy provision. Exactly how these practices were effective in addressing social exclusion and indeed what exactly it was that these practices were addressing was sometimes unclear. Exploring understandings of social exclusion through the lens of adult literacy practitioners offered the potential to provide insights which might contribute to a more nuanced understanding of policy and practice and thus contribute to the development of adult literacy provision. In addition as an adult literacy practitioner I was frequently working in partnership across organisational and professional boundaries to facilitate learning programmes and opportunities for individuals and groups. Increasingly I was working collaboratively with professionals from the health and physical activity sectors and was aware that amongst the disciplines there were differences in perceptions about social exclusion and in attitudes about appropriate approaches and practices when working with individuals and groups. I was therefore interested in exploring influences on practices and approaches and the commonalities and differences between the discourses of social exclusion and practice in adult literacy and other professions. I believed this might give me some insight into the practices and approaches of other professionals engaged in the promotion of social inclusion and ultimately support more effective collaborative working.

There is a substantial and growing body of literature which theorises social exclusion and the policy approaches it generates. Literature about the practice which these policy approaches precipitate, however, is relatively limited. Substantive claims have been made in policy and literature for the impact of both physical activity and literacy provision but some academics (Long and Bramham, 2006; Coalter, 2007) in physical activity have complained that lack of rigour in gathering and evaluating evidence makes it difficult to assess the impact of provision. Likewise, in literacy, St Clair (2010) draws attention to the relative silence on how certain pedagogical perspectives endorsed in policy translate into practice. The role of practitioners in implementing or perhaps resisting policy has also been emphasised. Crowther et al., (2001:7) for example assert that ‘democracy is too important to be left to the policy makers and politicians’ and argue for practitioners ‘to become resources’ in the process ‘by building a broad and rich curriculum that firmly embraces literacy

education for democracy' (ibid). It is clear that they understand practitioners to be important conduits of government policy in the sense that they are positioned to enact and also to interpret and influence it. Recognition of the pivotal position practitioners inhabit is acknowledged by Tett (2006:49) in her reference to the value their voices bring to research and practice and her plea for a greater role for them in these areas. Hamilton and Pitt (2011:369) also recently highlighted the importance of the practitioner perspective complaining that their 'voices' are rarely heard in policy and emphasising the need to close this gap. Underpinning this study, is the conviction that practitioners' views are important. They are important because practitioners are the filter through which public policy becomes action and are one interface where private problems can be acknowledged as public concerns and responsibilities.

This research is intended to reduce the research gap, by exploring social exclusion discourses in policy and the discourses of some adult literacy and adult physical activity practitioners in Scotland. In exploring the discourses of adult literacy practitioners and drawing comparisons with physical activity practitioners, which is a field with which I am less familiar, I hoped to make apparent the taken for granted assumptions which are embedded in, and govern, practices. My aim is to add to the body of knowledge about social exclusion, adult literacy and physical activity provision by making explicit the 'truths' that are embedded in discourses of policy and practice, their discursive connections and disjunctions. I anticipate that in doing so the study will illuminate some of the influences and constraints on discourse and the implications for practice and contribute to critical debate about social exclusion, adult literacy and adult physical activity and the role of practitioners in the development and implementation of policy.

This study is underpinned by a theoretical framework informed by the work of Foucault. Foucault thought discourse to be fundamental to the way people structure and perceive reality. He argued that:

> In every society the production of a discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers

> and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality (Foucault, 1971:52).

Foucault hypothesised that different forces act to shape and constrain discourses and consequently individuals do not have freedom to say anything they like. These forces are exercised both externally and internally through a web of institutions, social practices and relations. I therefore understand discourses to be subjective representations of reality which may defy explanation but nevertheless exist. My aim therefore is not to arrive at a definitive view or truth about social exclusion, literacy and physical activity policy and practice discourse but rather to understand better the social, historical and cultural influences and constraints which shape these discourses. In adopting this perspective it is essential to acknowledge that as a researcher I too am subject to similar forces and that the choices I have made in carrying out this study, my analysis and representation of the data are equally a product of social, historical and cultural influences.

In conducting this research I have engaged with the resources of Critical Discourse Analysis, an approach described as having an overt political agenda with the purpose of drawing attention to the way language functions to exercise power in society (Fairclough, 1992). As an analytical tool it offers strategies to explore the purpose and meaning of language and how the discursive strategies we employ are influenced. It acknowledges discourse as a product of the dynamic interaction of knowledge structures, attitudes (socially shared opinions) and ideologies (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2001a; Wodak, 2001; Meyer, 2001). Social exclusion, literacy and physical activity are, as the literature suggests, concepts which are politically nuanced. The resources of critical discourse analysis offer insightful ways of uncovering the assumptions and taken for granted values that discursive practices about these things entail. They also require the researcher to acknowledge and confront personal subjectivities in planning and implementing research.

The focus of this study and its interest to explore discourses of social exclusion in policy and practice therefore required both a study of the discourses of others but also a need to reflect upon my own uses of language and the assumptions

underpinning these. Language is about communication and communication requires some commonality in the meanings we attach to terms. As I have described, terms such as social exclusion, literacy and physical activity are not neutral and yet to communicate about these topics they have to be used. In Scotland, for example, practitioners and policy makers commonly use the term literacies to refer to adult literacy provision and often describe their roles as promoting social inclusion. Uses of these terms and others such as these, I contend, are discursive acts which are imbued with meaning and political nuance. In an environment where they are a common currency they are hard to avoid, but in this study I have tried in my narrative to be alert to the assumptions which underpin the language I use. I have tried to steer away from using terms which are overtly associated with a specific pedagogic perspective and have therefore utilised 'literacy' as a generic term since it seemed to me less emotive than 'literacies'. Likewise I have tended to use the term 'social exclusion' and have avoided 'social inclusion' because of the policy approach that implies.

Thesis summary

Here I briefly summarise the structure and content of this thesis.

Chapter One is organised in three sections which include reviews of relevant literature pertaining to social exclusion, adult literacy and physical activity. It begins with a discussion about social exclusion and the literature relating to definition, cause and its usefulness as a term in dealing with poverty and disadvantage. The second section explores literature about adult literacy and how it is interpreted in theory and policy and how it is perceived in the context of social exclusion. The third section addresses physical activity, the meanings attributed to this term and how it is understood to contribute to social exclusion via the health improvement and equality agenda. Finally I identify the aims of the research, articulating three research questions which the study addresses.

Chapter Two sets out the aims of my research, the theoretical approach and the research methods which I employed. I explain the Foucauldian perspective on

discourse which informs this study and my use of Critical Discourse Analysis. I describe the practical steps I took in implementing this research project.

Chapter Three, in keeping with the interpretative approach I have adopted for this research, contains a series of interpretative accounts of my interviews with literacy and physical activity practitioners. These accounts are based upon my field notes and digital recordings which were made of practitioners' narratives.

Chapter 4 addresses the first of my research questions, and comprises an analysis of key Scottish policy texts about social exclusion, literacy and physical activity. In this chapter I illustrate the links that have been made in policy between economic development and social exclusion. I also identify discursive themes in adult literacy and physical activity policy which link to the key Scottish social exclusion policy texts.

Chapter Five presents the findings from my interviews with practitioners and addresses the second and third of my research questions. My findings showed that practitioners mainly characterised and defined social exclusion in economic terms and that there were strong similarities in literacy and physical activity practitioners' recognition of confidence building as an important aspect of their practice.

Chapter Six presents a series of discussions which are my interpretative account of practitioners' discursive practices. These discussions are built around three narratives which I have identified in discourses of adult literacy and physical activity in Scotland. These narratives are based on taken for granted assumptions about the benefits of literacy and physical activity, the instrumentality of these types of provision in achieving political goals, and a perspective which is informed by neo-liberal individualism.

Chapter Seven comprises a reflection on the purpose of the study, the interpretative approach I adopted, and the extent to which the research aims have been addressed. It draws attention to the assumptions in policy and practice that the study has made explicit and considers the relevance of my findings for adult literacy and physical activity provision in Scotland.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

In this Chapter I review the literature on social exclusion. Later I review the literature on approaches to adult literacy provision in the context of social exclusion and then similarly the literature on adult physical activity. The Chapter is divided into three sections. I begin by exploring the concept of social exclusion and the meanings that have been attached to it and the implications of these discourses for policy and practice. I follow this with two further sections which address the ways in which literacy and physical activity are articulated in relation to social exclusion.

Section1

Discourses of Social Exclusion

Introduction

In this section I describe the background to and some definitions of social exclusion. I discuss ways that social exclusion has been conceptualised and analysed and the typologies that have been applied to do this. In particular I describe the perspective taken by Levitas (2005) because of the way in which her analysis is specific to the recent UK socio-political environment. I also consider social exclusion from a specifically Scottish policy perspective and alternative discourses particularly social inclusion.

What is Social Exclusion?

The history of 'social exclusion' as a term and the emergence of the concept as a policy concern for social democratic governments in Western Europe have been well documented (Silver, 1994; Room, 1995; Levitas, 1998; Lister, 2004; Davies, 2005). Most commentators trace the roots of social exclusion as a policy concept to France and to French social policy of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its origins are

attributed to the French Secretary of State for Social Welfare in the 1970s, Renee Lenoir, who coined the term 'les exclus' to describe people who were disconnected and alienated from mainstream society in ways that extended beyond poverty, and included aspects such as 'non-participation in politics, poor health and geographical isolation' (Davies, 2005:4) . By the late 1980s the European Commission had embraced the term 'social exclusion' in part 'to accommodate the reluctance of some member governments to use the word poverty' (Lister, 2004:75). The term has been used by European Union member states including the UK. The New Labour Government between 1997 and 2010 adopted the term as a central component of its social policy programme (Mathieson et al., 2008). As Levitas (2005: ix) observed 'The language of social exclusion ... has become commonplace in public discourse, and pervades government policy'. Kelly et al., (2004; 2005) argued that its adoption in UK policy represented the process of 'harmonisation' of social policy across Europe and that it is also a feature of the recent rapid evolution of the language used to talk about disadvantage and inequality. According to Kelly et al., (2004, 2005) the harmonisation of social policy post 1992, associated with the Maastricht Treaty and the Treaty of Amsterdam 1997, precipitated a change of language in social policy in the UK. Consequently 'social exclusion', which represented a multi-dimensional notion of disadvantage, replaced 'poverty' and its more narrow associations with monetary lack as the vocabulary of social policy. However understandings of poverty and disadvantage had been evolving since the 1970s.

In the U.K. Townsend (1979) introduced the idea of relative poverty, writing that

> Individuals, families and groups can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least are widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities (Townsend, 1979:32).

This perspective offered a wider view about what constituted poverty than previous understandings. Traditional notions of poverty were based on the very basic needs of adequate food and shelter for survival, however Townsend (1997) introduced poverty

as a relative condition better understood in relation to societal expectations of what constituted a normal and healthy life. It also drew attention to the way in which lack of material resources prevents people from fully participating in society. Although Townsend did not use the term social exclusion, he argued for a more complex analysis of the impact of poverty on people's lives which established the relationship between material disadvantage and being shut out of social participation.

Atkinson and Hills (1998) argued that social exclusion is a complex phenomenon and more than merely a substitute word for poverty. They wrote

> The terms poverty and social exclusion have on occasion been used interchangeably, but they are not the same. People may be poor without being socially excluded; and others may be socially excluded without being poor (Atkinson and Hills, 1998:v).

In most analyses of social exclusion economic disadvantage is an important element, but is often only one of many related symptoms of wider disadvantage and inequity (Edwards et al., 2001). Room (1995) has been attributed with establishing the idea, in academic and policy circles, of social exclusion as a multi-dimensional, dynamic and relational concept. Mathieson et al., (2008:11) identify that definitions of social exclusion 'variously emphasise' the groups which are at risk of being excluded, the things that people are excluded from, the problems that are associated with social exclusion, the processes that drive exclusion and the agents of social exclusion.

Landman (2006:19) emphasises that social exclusion 'involves discrimination against individuals and groups based on one or many different social attributes or elements of social identity'. Burchardt et al. (2002:30) point out that 'An individual is socially excluded if he or she does not participate in key activities of the society in which he or she lives'. Fleury (1998:13) focuses on the problems that occur as a result of social exclusion and explains that 'excluded groups are, in general, prevented from participating in predominant economic relationships – the market, as producers and/or consumers – and in political relationships, in effect political rights'. Likewise, Pierson (2010:12) refers to social exclusion as 'a process that deprives individuals and families, groups and neighbourhoods of the resources required for participation in the social, economic and political activity of society as a whole'.

Levitas et al. (2007:25) describe social exclusion as being 'a complex and multi-dimensional process' and define it as involving 'the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas'. Their view is that 'It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole' (ibid). Social exclusion is also represented as the consequence of the activities of the state, whether intended or not (Estivill, 2003; Barnes, 2005; Landeman, 2006).

Some commentators have attributed the shift from discourses of poverty to discourses of social exclusion as serving a political purpose by distracting from uncomfortable questions about wealth distribution in society (Estivill, 2003). The growing popularity of the discourse has been associated with the spread of neo-liberal ideology (Byrne, 1999; Levitas, 2005; Gough and Eisenschitz, 2006).

However other commentators offer a more positive explanation of the popularity in policy discourse of social exclusion (Mathieson et al., 2008). The concept of social exclusion brings what Lister (2004) described as 'value added' to the discussion about poverty. One way of understanding the 'value added' is that it brings 'new insights' to 'the analysis of poverty' constituting what she describes as 'a significant conceptual shift' from traditional views of poverty and disadvantage. She develops her argument about the benefits of using the term, by pointing out that even if it brings no new insights it 'acts as a catalyst' encouraging 'broad and dynamic analysis' of disadvantage (2004:88). There are several 'recurrent' themes in the social exclusion discussion which revolve around these perspectives (Lister, 2004) and these relate to what the concept adds in terms of understanding relations and rights, social divisions and multi-dimensionality in the discussion about poverty and disadvantage. By focussing on the 'dynamic' of social exclusion she emphasises it 'should be understood as a process rather than a condition or category' (2004:94). Social exclusion seen as a dynamic process illuminates the impact of unequal power relations in society generated by discrimination linked to factors such as ethnicity, gender, disability and class.

Conceptualising Social Exclusion

Levitas (2005) suggests that social exclusion is best understood as a concept rather than an empirical reality. Koller and Davidson (2008) explored conceptualisations of social exclusion and the impact of conceptual and grammatical metaphor on social exclusion policy making in the U.K. They illustrated how society is often represented in policy and public discourses as a 'bounded space'. According to Chilton (1996 cited by Koller and Davidson, 2008:312), the mental model of society used in this metaphor is 'a variety of the container metaphor, which is frequently used to conceptualise the nation state'. The 'container' metaphor represents society as having 'a normative centre and a problematic periphery' (2008:307). According to this metaphor, the included majority exist in the centre and the excluded minorities exist on the margins (Levitas 2005). Through use of this metaphor the reduction of social exclusion as a policy objective is envisaged as a normalising intervention and is characterised as being about strategies to move individuals from the edge of society (the container) towards the centre. The problem with this conceptualisation, however, is that it is said to over simplify the nature and structure of society (Levitas, 2005; Koller and Davidson, 2008). Levitas (2005) points out that it disregards the 'graded nature' of existence within the included space and glosses over the inequalities that exist amongst the included majority. Society as a container, however, is a conceptualisation that is common in public and policy discourse right across the ideological and philosophical spectrum. Koller and Davidson (2008) illustrated in their research, citing a range of policy texts, how expressions like 'cut off', 'shut out', 'on the edge of society', 'on the margins of society' are commonly used to describe experiences of social exclusion.

Judge (1995) noted that the container metaphor has profound effects on cognitive processes and that it tends to 'structure thinking' around how the excluded that are 'shut out' should be 'let in'. In essence his critique was that it is a conceptualisation which in the main leaves the constructions of society unchallenged. He argues that the metaphor encourages the problematisation of the victims of poverty and disadvantage, not the mechanisms which precipitate it. In a similar vein, Levitas

(2005) described how this conceptualisation leads to policies to address social exclusion which focus on ways of

> lifting the poor over the boundary of a minimum standard – or to be more accurate, inducing those who are sufficiently sound in mind and limb to jump over it – while leaving untouched the overall pattern of inequality, especially the rich (Levitas, 2005:156).

The conceptualisation of society as a metaphorical bounded space has also been identified as a mechanism through which a dichotomy of 'us and them' can be established in which excluded individuals and groups are represented as being different by virtue of being outside 'mainstream' society (Lister, 2004). It accommodates what Lister (2004) has described as a process of 'othering', which she argues is related to stereo-typing, stigmatisation and the protection of vested interests. Society conceptualised as bounded space allows distinctions to be drawn between the excluded minority and the included majority. This is achieved through a process of mental distancing and differentiation in which the disadvantaged are often objectified and stigmatised and sometimes represented as culpable, through their own ignorance and ineptitude, for the disadvantage they experience (Eyben and Lovett, 2004).

So far I have discussed the different elements that are perceived to constitute social exclusion and how it is commonly conceptualised. De Haan (2001:28) argued that 'social exclusion is a theoretical concept, a lens through which people look at reality and not reality itself'. Silver (1994), Levitas (1998; 2005) and Beall (2002) each developed typologies which illuminate the political and ideological foundations which inform the differences in theorising social exclusion and thus the policy and actions to address it.

Typologies of Social Exclusion

Hilary Silver (1994), Ruth Levitas (1998; 2005) and Jo Beall (2002) each developed typologies to distinguish the different discourses of social exclusion. Silver (1994) described three paradigms of exclusion, Levitas (1998, 2005) referred to three

discourses of exclusion, and Beall (2002) identified three approaches. Silver's paradigms (1994) are based upon an analysis of social exclusion taken from a European perspective. The focus Levitas (1998, 2005) takes is from a UK policy perspective and is based on an analysis of policy from the mid-1990s. Beall's (2002) approach was developed from an analysis of exclusionary processes associated with globalisation. Each describes distinct paradigms, discourses or approaches that attribute the causes of social exclusion in different ways and thus prescribe different solutions. However these are acknowledged as theoretical models or ideal types. Levitas (2005:27) observes that 'In reality, although there are examples which conform very closely to a particular model, much public discourse slides between them'.

Silver (1994) distinguishes three paradigms of social exclusion which she argues offer distinct accounts for economic disadvantage and long term unemployment. Silver (1994) suggests that 'the discourse of exclusion may serve as a window through which to view political cultures' (1994:536) arguing that social exclusion has 'multiple meanings...embedded in conflicting social science paradigms and political ideologies' (ibid). Silver's definition of a paradigm draws on Kuhn (1970:175) who describes it as 'a constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by a given community' which 'specify not only what sorts of entities the universe does contain but also, by implication those that it does not' (1970:7). Silver argues that paradigms are 'ontologies that render reality comprehensible and that mingle elements of what "is" and what "ought to be" saying that 'when paradigms conflict, practitioners speak from incommensurable viewpoints using the same language to mean different things' (1994:536). In so saying, Silver argues that an analysis of social exclusion is required because it is in essence a contested term and that 'the values underlying its usage should be made explicit in order to clarify the implicit objectives of anti-exclusion policies' (1994:540).

The three paradigms which Silver identifies she labels Solidarity, Specialization, and Monopoly. Each is linked respectively to the political philosophical perspectives of Republicanism, Liberalism and Social Democracy and each 'provides an explanation of multiple forms of social disadvantage – economic, social, political and cultural –

and thus encompasses theories of citizenship and racial-ethnic inequality as well as poverty and long-term unemployment' (Silver, 1994:539). The Solidarity paradigm sees social exclusion as the break-down of the bonds between individuals and society. The focus here is on cultural and moral analysis of the nature of social exclusion rather than economic determinants. The Specialisation paradigm has an economic focus which 'emphasises the individual and micro-sociological causes of economic exclusion' (Mathieson et al., 2008:17). In effect, social exclusion is seen as arising from a mismatch between economic supply and demand. The Monopoly paradigm is a leftist analysis which sees social exclusion as deriving from the structural and power hierarchies in society which favour the insiders and restrict the access of others to resources.

Levitas (1998, 2005), like Silver, finds the term social exclusion 'intrinsically problematic' (2005:7). She argues that it presents an over-simplified bifurcated view of society in which the inequalities within the included majority are glossed over and the poverty and inequality of the excluded minority are seen as a peripheral issue. According to Levitas (ibid) 'The solution implied by a discourse of social exclusion is a minimalist one: a transition across the boundary to become an insider rather than an outsider in a society whose structural inequalities remain largely uninterrogated'. This is a description of social exclusion which resonates with the container metaphor of society described by Koller and Davidson (2008) as a facet of much political discourse about social exclusion. Levitas explains that she uses the term discourse in relation to social exclusion to mean 'sets of interrelated concepts [which] act together as a matrix [and] through which we understand the social world' (2005:3). Levitas sees discourses as both structuring understanding and governing action. Thus for her 'discourse constitutes ways of acting in the world, as well as a description of it. It both opens up and closes down possibilities for action for ourselves' (ibid). In this respect Levitas' ideas about discourse and Silver's idea of paradigm are very similar in that they both are frameworks – constellation or matrix – for analysis of social exclusion. Whilst Silver's analysis is based on the French and the wider European experience of social exclusion Levitas' analysis is specifically focussed on the UK and in particular New Labour policy approaches whilst in government. Levitas (1998, 2005) identified three distinct but often overlapping discourses in which she

argued social exclusion is embedded. Her view is that discourses differ in 'what defines people as insiders or outsiders, and how inclusion can be brought about' (2005:7). The three discourses are identified as: a redistributive discourse (RED) which focuses upon poverty and the inequitable distribution of wealth as the cause of social exclusion; a moral underclass discourse (MUD) which attributes social exclusion to the moral and behavioural deviance of the excluded; and a social integrationist discourse (SID) which 'stresses the integrative function of paid work' (Levitas, 2005:22).

RED, according to Levitas, 'emphasises poverty as the prime cause of social exclusion' and 'implies a radical reduction of inequalities, and a redistribution of resources and of power' (2005:14). She observes that recent UK government policy has not been reflective of this discourse arguing that during New Labour's early years in government its discourse of social exclusion was characterised by an 'inconsistent combination of SID and MUD' (2005:28) and a gradual shift from traditional socialist redistributive policies.

MUD is a discourse which focuses on the 'moral and cultural character of the poor' rather than' the 'structural basis of poverty' (Levitas 2005:15) as the root cause of social exclusion. Illegitimacy, crime and drop-out from the workforce according to Charles Murray (Murray, 1990:23), were indicators, measures and proof that 'an underclass has arrived'. The idea of an underclass is central to the MUD discourse, which according to Levitas characterises the socially excluded as: 'culturally distinct from the "mainstream"' and sees social exclusion as a direct consequence of the behaviour of the poor. The MUD discourse regards dependency on the state as problematic, but at the same time reinforces gendered personal economic dependency 'especially by women and children on men', which is simultaneously seen to be 'a civilising influence on men'. According to Levitas this is a gendered discourse about idleness, male criminality and female immorality. She argues that it takes no account of the value of unpaid work and does not acknowledge the inequalities in the rest of society (2005:21).

SID according to Levitas is a discourse of social exclusion which 'stresses the integrative function of paid work' (2005:22) and 'tends to reduce the social to the

economic and simultaneously limits understanding of economic activity to market activity' (2005:26). Features of SID are that it does not address the question of why people who are not in work are consigned to poverty nor does it address the question of why inequalities exist between paid workers, both along lines of gender and class. Levitas (2005) also notes that the failure of this discourse to acknowledge the economic and social value of unpaid work both 'implies an increase in women's total work load' and 'it undermines the legitimacy of non-participation in paid work' (2005:27). According to Mathieson et al. (2008:19) Levitas' analysis of social exclusion discourse 'is strongly informed by a socialist feminist perspective'.

Beall (2002) in her analysis of social exclusion approaches draws attention to the ways in which social exclusion is conceptualised variously as a 'state' or a 'process'. She describes what is referred to as a 'neo-liberal' approach in which social exclusion is viewed as 'an unfortunate but inevitable side effect of global economic realignment' (2002:43). The second approach is one in which she describes understandings of social exclusion to amount to 'little more than an unhelpful re-labelling of poverty or acts to distract attention from inequality generated by the workings of the economic system' (2002:44). The third approach she identifies and describes as 'transformationalist' is an analysis of social exclusion which takes account of social, political and cultural dimensions of power together with economic dimensions. The first two approaches conceptualise social exclusion as a 'state', while the third draws attention to the way that social interaction and power relations operate to precipitate disadvantage.

Each of these typologies of social exclusion offers insights to the ways in which social exclusion is understood, interpreted and ultimately translated into policy and the pursuant practices. In this study I have been guided by the analysis offered by Levitas (1998, 2005) because it was developed with a very specific focus upon UK social policy and has been widely recognised as a useful analytical tool with which to explore the nature of approaches to social exclusion in the UK context. Indeed, Levitas in her discussion about the three discourses of social exclusion, (RED, MUD and SID), alluded to the question of how policy is negotiated between these three

different discourses and 'what kind of inclusion [is delivered] for whom and on what terms' (2005:28).

Social Exclusion in Policy

In the UK, the New Labour government placed 'tackling' social exclusion at the centre of its social policy agenda and set up the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in December 1997 to promote and develop this agenda.

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) described social exclusion as

> … a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (SEU, 1997:1).

This definition was widely adopted throughout the public and voluntary sectors in the UK. The Scottish Office, for example, adapted it in *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a better Scotland*, which is the companion document to the *Social Inclusion Strategy* (Scottish Parliament, 2000). In this document, social exclusion was described as

> a term applied to the complex set of linked problems centred around lack of opportunity and diminished life circumstances, including unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, poor health and family breakdown (Scottish Office 1999:59).

This multi-dimensional view of poverty and disadvantage has informed subsequent social policy in Scotland and the rest of the UK despite some terminological variations in the language of policy.

In Scotland, and latterly more widely across the UK, policy discourse has been couched in terms of social inclusion rather than social exclusion. This preference has been evident in Scotland since 1998 and is associated with the influence of the Scottish Social Inclusion Network on Scottish policy perspectives (Fawcett 2005).

However, latterly, use of the term social inclusion is much in evidence across the whole of the UK.

According to a briefing paper produced for members of the Scottish Parliament, the adoption of a different terminology in Scotland represented 'a distinct approach ... placing the emphasis on policies that promote Social Inclusion' (Scottish Parliament 2000:5). However, according to Fawcett (2005) this terminological difference, rather than being evidence of policy differences between Scotland and the rest of the UK, reflected a Scottish desire to create distance from an attitudinal view of the previous Conservative government. In other words the distinction was probably more rhetorical than substantive. Other commentators concur, arguing that beyond semantic difference there is little evidence of any significant divergence between the Scottish and UK parliaments in respect of social exclusion policy (McWilliams et al., 2004). In fact Donald Dewar in the foreword to *Social Justice…a Scotland where everyone matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a) acknowledges that this key Scottish strategic policy document derived from work carried out by the Scottish Inclusion Network together with the UK government publication *Opportunity for All: Tackling poverty and Social Exclusion* (DWP, 1999).

The SID discourse to which paid employment is pivotal has been in evidence in UK and Scottish social policy since the latter part of the 1990s but has more recently become even more prominent and eclipsed other policy discourses. Since 1997 economic development has been increasingly recognised as the main mechanism for addressing poverty, disadvantage and inequality and thus social exclusion. As early as 1999 the Scottish Executive (Scottish Executive, 1999a:6) stated 'the main driver for poverty has been worklessness' and this discourse is evident in all areas of policy. In 2002, in *Closing the Opportunity Gap*, the Scottish Executive's budget plan for achieving social justice it was stated that

> None of us wants to live in a Scotland where poverty and prejudice are allowed to prevail...our plans will tackle poverty, build strong, safe communities and create a fair, equal Scotland where rights for all is our byword...We will help those without work find jobs... Unemployment may be falling, but people living in Scotland's most deprived areas are still four times more

> likely to be out of work. That is why we will devote our energies to increasing training and employment opportunities in these communities (Scottish Executive, 2002:6).

Increased employment was clearly being articulated here as a central aspect of addressing poverty and disadvantage.

By 2008 the SNP Government in Scotland had established a social inclusion framework encapsulated in three linked policy documents. These are *Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2008a), *Equally Well* (Scottish Government, 2008b) and *The Early Years Framework* (Scottish Government, 2008c). All of these foreground economic prosperity through increased access to paid work as fundamental to achieving the government's goal of 'a Scotland which is wealthier and fairer' (Scottish Government, 2008a). The increasing dominance of SID as the discourse of social policy is evident in policy documents pertaining to adult literacy and learning published between 2001 and 2010. In the late 1990s and early part of the 21st century a discourse of lifelong learning in which the intrinsic worth of learning was more evident in key policy documents relating to adult learning generally and literacy specifically but SID discourses of exclusion were already present.

In 2001 the tentative view was expressed that

> In an increasingly globalised economy, Scotland's future prosperity and competitiveness depends on building up the skills of her existing workforce and improving the employability of those seeking work. But improving literacy skills can also provide the first steps to learning other languages, promoting understanding in a multi-cultural society and accessing a whole range of life opportunities. An inclusive society is also a literate society (Scottish Executive, 2001:7).

By 2010 in the Scottish Government's strategic guidance for literacy the evidence for SID inspired policy is much stronger

> The Scottish Government is committed to creating a smarter, wealthier, healthier, greener and fairer Scotland, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Central to this

> purpose is the refreshed skills strategy 'Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth'. This strategy reaffirms that "improving levels of adult literacy and numeracy is crucial to securing a competitive economy, promoting education and lifelong learning, and tackling ill-health and improving well-being (Scottish Government, 2010c).

The SNP discourse seems firmly in the SID camp but ideas about social inclusion also included particularly left of centre European perspectives. The use of the term Solidarity has echoes of French leftist rhetoric and may reflect how the SNP government perceived itself in relation to the rest of Europe and the UK government.

> Delivering Solidarity will mean working across Government and public services in a joint national effort to create the conditions for more and better paid jobs in Scotland; to provide the skills needed to participate and progress in the workforce; and to remove the barriers that stand in the way of individuals realising their full potential. However, we must ensure that those who cannot participate in the labour market are not left behind. (Scottish Government 2008a)

It does appear to contain the essence of the Solidarity paradigm (Silver, 1994), according to which, social exclusion is seen as a consequence of a rupture between the individual and wider society. A socially inclusive society, according to the paradigm of Solidarity, is premised upon the assimilation of individuals into the dominant culture of a society and for which the state is seen as principally responsible.

The continuing focus in Scotland upon employment as the principal mechanism through which to address poverty and social exclusion however has remained and, arguably, become more concentrated (Mooney et al., 2008) since May 2007. In essence then, the policy approaches seem to be broadly similar across the UK and is encapsulated in the following 2008 Department of Work and Pension (DWP) policy statement;

> Full employment is at the heart of the United Kingdom (UK) strategy to ensure an inclusive, cohesive and prosperous society with fairness and social justice. Work is good for people of all ages, their families and

> society, and vital in the fight against child poverty. Not only are people who work better off financially, they are better off in terms of their health and well-being, their self-esteem and their independence (DWP, 2008).

Kelly et al. (2004), however, in their analysis of Scottish social policy comment that more recently social exclusion as a policy term has been super-ceded, first by 'social inclusion' and then by the term 'social justice'. The terms social exclusion, social inclusion, social justice, fairness are all terms which have become commonplace within discourses of social policy and practice in Scotland and the UK and it seems they are used interchangeably. Like social exclusion these other terms refer to 'the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society' (Walker and Walker, 1997:8). Kelly et al. (2004, 2005) suggest that the use of these terms represent, little if any, real difference in policy perspectives, although analyses of current social policy in Scotland seems to indicate that different administrations do have linguistic preferences. However, incorporation of new terms in the policy literature, seems to be indicative of an expansion of the social policy language repertoire, rather than a radical change to the policy itself. There is little evidence to support the view that the terms poverty, social exclusion, social inclusion, social justice and fairness have replaced each other chronologically in policy literature, as some commentators have suggested (Kelly et al, 2004). The following excerpt, from the introduction to a document outlining the UK Government's approach to the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion illustrates, and makes reference to all of the terms mentioned.

> Poverty and social exclusion are multi-faceted concepts which have fairness and equal rights at their core. That is why the Government is committed to building an inclusive, cohesive and prosperous society with fairness and social justice at its core (DWP no date).

The addition of new terms to the social policy lexicon has contributed little in the way of clarity or better understanding about the nature and causality of poverty and disadvantage, and possibly even added further confusion. Although social policy texts make use of all of these terms, the meanings remain opaque and sometimes contentious. Like poverty, social exclusion, social inclusion, social justice and

fairness are ideas determined by values and philosophical perspective (Miller, 2001; Honneth, 2004; Lister, 2004) and these terms therefore, are definable only in this context. However the plethora of terms used to talk about poverty and disadvantage in the social policy lexicon, may signify growing recognition of the complexity of the subject and acknowledgement that solutions require an analysis that goes beyond simplistic and reductionist terms. Alternatively the expansion of the social policy lexicon may be symptomatic of different party political and geographic vested interest to claim ownership of social policy initiatives. This view is substantiated in the following reference to health provision in the UK, where it is observed that 'community' concepts (empowerment, capacity) have been replaced by 'social' concepts (capital, cohesion) and that this 'continuous re-labelling of roughly similar phenomena may be a necessary stratagem to attract attention to the economic and power inequalities that arise from undisciplined markets' (Labonte, 2004:115).

My focus in this research on social exclusion is a reflection of the prevalence of the term when I began this research and its continuing presence in the contemporary policy and practice discourses of adult literacy and physical activity provision in Scotland. However the evident preference to articulate policy within a positive framework, in other words what governments do to promote social inclusion as opposed to address social exclusion, requires a brief exploration of the term which appears to enjoy currency in Scottish policy and practice.

Social Inclusion

Lister (2004:78) argued that 'implicit in the idea of social exclusion is its opposite; social inclusion'. Although the term 'inclusion' carries with it more aspirational political connotations than social exclusion, it seems its meaning is no more transparent. Social integration through paid work is the intended outcome of social inclusion policies in the UK (Lister, 2004; Levitas, 2005). Although there seems to be consensus that social inclusion is the objective in policy designed to address social exclusion, social inclusion as a concept, according to Lister (2004:79), is just as contested and 'even less clearly articulated' than social exclusion. Both Silver (1994)

and Levitas (2005) ask the question, 'Exclusion from what?' making it plain that the concepts are interdependent and that 'the notion of exclusion calls for an account of social inclusion' (Silver, 1994:541). Lister (2004:79) points out that 'social inclusion' implies a 'normalising logic' which leaves 'unquestioned the efficacy of capitalist social relations'. This critique draws attention to the way that use of the term 'social inclusion' circumvents having to deal with the root causes of social exclusion, or even having to engage in reflecting about what these might be. Ironically, Estivill (2003) was similarly critical of the term 'social exclusion' since it avoided the difficult questions which a policy focus on poverty raises in relation to unequal distribution of wealth. Likewise, a focus upon 'social inclusion' avoids interrogating how and who benefits from the way society is organised and structured. Instead, it focuses on the symptoms or consequences of social exclusion at an individual level, in the main, and offers to address the symptoms, without dealing with fundamental problems in social organisation and structure. It does this in policy and practice by promoting aspirational goals for social integration. In the UK this is, in the main, seen as being underpinned by increased access to and engagement in paid work through a raft of social policy initiatives relating to education, health and welfare benefits (Levitas, 2005; Levitas et al., 2007). The problem, however, with equating social inclusion with engagement in paid work is that firstly inclusion in the labour market on low wages 'does not constitute genuine poverty free social inclusion' and secondly unpaid work is 'discounted and effectively devalued and marginalised' (Lister, 2004:79). Indeed this policy approach is premised upon a particular ideological and philosophical perspective about the causes and nature of social exclusion.

Social exclusion, as an analytical approach, has been described as having the potential to enrich studies about poverty (Hickey and Du Toit, 2007). According to these authors, it contextualises the study of poverty in relation to social systems and structures. It focuses on causality. It makes explicit the multi-dimensional nature of poverty by drawing attention to factors such as gender, ethnicity and culture and it focuses on the political aspects of poverty. The political aspects of poverty which are encapsulated by a notion of social exclusion are in the link it makes between poverty and citizenship status. Hickey and Du Toit (2007:3) cite denial of things such as

political rights in terms of participation and the right to organise, lack of personal security, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity. However reflecting the concerns of Lister (2004), researchers writing from a perspective of poverty and international development (Du Toit, 2004a; Green and Hulme, 2005; Hickey, 2008), regard social inclusion as insufficiently sophisticated a concept in terms of understanding chronic poverty and the solutions in the developing world. The concept of adverse incorporation is offered up as a more realistic conceptualisation of how social and economic participation is often manifest. Adverse incorporation reflects the reality that individuals and groups may be incorporated within social and economic frameworks but their inclusion in this way is highly problematic since it fails to address underlying issues of poverty and rights as a citizen (Du Toit, 2004b).

Summary

Understandings of social exclusion are determined by philosophical and ideological perspectives and the mental models that individuals use to view and interpret the world they inhabit. Views about social exclusion are inextricably linked with the concept of poverty, but are seen as providing a multi-dimensional and dynamic perspective on the analysis of disadvantage and inequality in society.

Conceptual models can offer useful ways to think about and construct understandings about abstract ideas such as social exclusion, but they can also constrict and constrain how we are able to analyse the ideas and issues which the concept embraces. In the case of social exclusion, the representation of society as a bounded space gives rise to possibly over simplistic policy prescriptions, which are premised upon ideas associated with moving individuals and groups from the outside and into society. Levitas (2005) is critical of this conceptualisation because it ignores inequalities and dynamics within the included space which is society. Social inclusion too, as an alternative or opposite to social exclusion in policy rhetoric, is recognised as problematic because it detracts attention from the underlying causes of social exclusion, by focussing policy on addressing symptoms of disadvantage and inequality (Lister 2004).

Defining social exclusion is also problematic. Silver (1994), Levitas (1998; 2005) and Beall (2002) in their typologies offer frameworks for the analysis of different policy approaches to social exclusion. These different policy approaches, they argue, are determined by specific ideological perspectives on the causes and nature of social exclusion. Whilst these frameworks are helpful in the analysis of policy, often what they reveal are confused and inconsistent discourses. Levitas' (2005) framework offers a particularly useful tool to interrogate adult literacy and adult physical activity policy and practice because it is based specifically on an analysis of recent UK social policy perspectives on social exclusion. My discussion about the social exclusion policy framework in Scotland since the late 20th century reveals the complex policy landscape and is consistent with Levitas's (2005) analysis that the dominant social exclusion policy discourse in the UK is a social integrationist (SID) one. However, aspects which are redistributive (RED) and moralising (MUD) discourses about poverty and disadvantage are still present and are evident in the way that policy seems to valorise certain lifestyles over others, and continues to promote, for example, the notion of lifelong learning as a policy objective.

So it seems that Adult Literacy and Physical Activity practitioners operate in a policy environment where different, and often contradictory discourses, act to shape policy and practice. In the following sections I explore discourses about social exclusion in the specific contexts of adult literacy and physical activity policy and practice.

Section 2

Discourses of Adult Literacy and Social Exclusion in Scotland

Introduction

In this section, I discuss some definitions and philosophical perspectives that underpin views about literacy and how they relate to the concept of social exclusion. I also consider how these different perspectives on literacy and social exclusion contribute to the discourse of literacy and social exclusion in Scotland.

Literacy and social inclusion policy in Scotland is articulated in a complex set of discourses. According to St Clair (2010), the common theme in the discourses is that literacy is important. He acknowledges this by choosing not 'to spend very much time...on the question of whether literacy and literacy education matter', but rather on 'the *ways* in which literacy matters, and how we can understand and acknowledge those more deeply' (2010:3). Commentary in literacy research generally seems to be cautious about the claims of social and economic benefits to the individual and society, specifically attributable to literacy and numeracy learning. This is perhaps reflected in St Clair's concern that 'over claiming for the effects of policy investment can lead to rapid disillusionment and reduction of political and financial support' (2010:2). Not only is there a danger in over claiming, but also there is a need to determine who benefits and from whose perspective literacy learning is beneficial. The idea that a set of distinct and universal benefits derive from literacy learning seems incompatible with a post-modern analysis of government policy and society. The discourses surrounding literacy theory, policy and practice and its relationship to social inclusion, occupy an ideological spectrum. The perspectives included range from reinforcing conservative societal norms, attitudes and behaviours to a radical one, which challenges dominant attitudes and views about literacy which accompany these and aims to change the power structures upon which these are based.

Lankshear and Gee (1995) warned of the ways in which dominant ideologies through the use of language can influence ways of seeing and thinking. They contest that 'key terms from the conceptual armament of critical pedagogy and critical literacy'

have been 'usurped' and used to serve the narrow interests of the market orientated and driven world of work which is becoming increasingly dominant in shaping education curricula and practices to its detriment (1995:18). Examples of education policies in a Scottish (Scottish Government, 2007a) and UK (DfEE, 2001) context attest to this analysis. They are firmly located within a neo-liberal economic framework in which employment is seen as pivotal in social inclusion and for the achievement of social justice. Hamilton et al., (2006:7) refer to this trend in adult literacy policy as the 'commodification of literacy and numeracy' which they describe as a 'top down definition of literacy where need is defined for learners rather than negotiated with them'. However, although the current policy discourse in Scotland is explicit in foregrounding an economic rationale for adult literacy provision, policy is situated within a wider social justice agenda. The development of skills including literacy and numeracy is articulated as central to the achievement of economic prosperity and benefits 'such as social justice, stronger communities and more engaged communities' are seen as consequential on this prosperity (Scottish Government, 2007a:6). However the discourses of policy and practice also reveal a strong attachment to traditions of community education (Crowther et al., 1999) in which education has both intrinsic worth and emancipatory potential. In Scotland therefore economic pragmatism, liberal education and critical pedagogy inhabit the social inclusion discourses of literacy policy and practice. These narratives are not the same yet it seems that in the territories of literacy policy and practice there is a constant struggle to reconcile what are often contradictory and divergent pedagogical perspectives. Crowther and Martin (2010) draw attention to this struggle when they make reference to the distinction 'sometimes made' in Scottish adult education between 'radical' and 'respectable' traditions of education. The former they describe as typically a catalyst for change at both individual and societal levels and associate with non-formal provision and the latter they describe as typically conservative, preoccupied with the maintenance and reinforcement of the established social order and associated with formal learning and the institution.

These discourses of literacy are embedded in several different conceptualisations of social exclusion and understandings about the purpose and nature of education and

learning. There are strong assumptions made in theory, policy and practice about the contribution literacy provision and learning make in addressing social exclusion. Bird and Akerman (2005:7) for example say "improving the general standard of literacy teaching of pupils, students and adult learners will, of course benefit those most at risk of social exclusion' but imply in subsequent observations that social inclusion is brought about just as much by 'critical factors such as strengthening learners' self-esteem and their social networks' (2005:27). It seems Bird and Akerman (2005) are arguing that engagement in learning in any sense and not just literacy specific provision may be the crucial factor in promoting social inclusion.

Traditions in Literacy Discourse

That adult literacy is a contested field is evident in the amount of discussion researchers and academics have dedicated to the nature and definition of the term. The choice of the term literacies or literacy may itself be seen to represent a particular pedagogical perspective. Some writers (Barton, 2007; St Clair, 2010) have justified their choice and their definition of literacy in their writing as 'language in textual form' (St Clair, 2010:7) as making a large and complex subject more manageable. Barton (2007:18) points out that 'Looking for a precise definition of literacy may be an impossible task'. Giroux (2001:207), for example, regards literacy as 'a political phenomenon' which 'in part, represents an embattled epistemological terrain on which different social groups struggle over how reality is to be signified, reproduced, and resisted'. Following Foucault (1972) he argues that like schooling, meanings that are attached to literacy are embedded in historical process and ideological interests. Discursive practices in adult literacy, as in all areas of life, are the manifestation of these historical processes and ideological interests. This means that discourse reflects different views about power, about how it ought to be distributed and about the nature and purposes of literacy. Different analyses of the processes of learning and teaching and different personal experiences are conveyed in discursive practices. Some discursive practices reflect aspiration while others reflect lived experience. Although the term 'literacies' is widely used in Scotland, in

this study I refer to 'adult literacy' not to imply a particular discourse or pedagogical stance but to avoid aligning with a particular perspective.

Hamilton's (2010) analysis of literacy is also illuminating. She describes a long established tradition in the English speaking world, of seeing 'literacy as a discrete set of skills' but argues that literacy is more than this describing it as being socially and historically situated. This perspective she labels as 'literacy as situated social practice'. Hamilton argues that by recognising literacy as 'a form of situated social practice' then it is not necessary to identify 'one true definition'. She argues that an analysis of the purpose to which literacy is put reveals three different discourses: literacy as a set of functional skills; literacy as a civilising tool; and literacy as a means of emancipation. In saying this she is aligning with Giroux (2001) and the view that it is more useful to think and talk about literacy in terms of different discourses.

In offering explanations of different discourses, Hamilton (2010) describes cognitive approaches to literacy learning as being aligned with a view of literacy as 'a discrete set of skills'. She describes it as being in essence, a technical approach and fundamentally about training the learner to understand the components of text and by that means becoming enabled to decode and manipulate it. In contrast the social practice theory of literacy learning is described as focussing upon the events and practices of literacy (Hamilton, 2010; Barton 2007). In other words, its focus is upon the context in which literacy is used taking into account the participants, the use texts are put to, the settings in which texts are used, the domains or areas of life in which texts are used (e.g. workplace, home, education) and the resources used to access texts (Hamilton 2010:11). In reference to the domains or areas of life in which texts are used, Hamilton stresses the importance of viewing text use as being underpinned by values and purpose and in doing so underlines a view of literacy as something which is constantly changing and adapting.

This idea of literacy, as something which is constantly changing and adapting, underpins St Clair's (2010) proposal for a 'working model of literacies capabilities'. In developing his proposal, St Clair bases his idea upon an amalgam of, what he identifies as, the three 'most influential' ways of understanding literacy. He describes

them as 'the clearest and most developed' approaches and he asserts that they 'underpin most pragmatic approaches' used to inform policy and practice. They are listed as functional literacy, mental operations and social practices.

It does seem that there is a consistent theme or assumption in the policy and practice discourses of literacy and social exclusion in Scotland. The theme or assumption is that the development of strong individual literacy capabilities is pivotal in the achievement of a socially inclusive society. St Clair (2010), in his analysis of literacy policy and practice, endorses this view but suggests that a robust case for literacy provision needs to be developed if it is to remain a policy priority. His discussion focuses not on whether literacy matters (it is assumed it does) but on the ways in which it matters and how practices, although outcome driven, can be reconciled with his 'humanistic commitment to reducing inequity in whatever form it appears' (2010:4). He suggests what he calls the 'capabilities model' as an approach which reconciles functional, cognitive and social practice approaches, often represented as conflicting. He argues, these approaches are not incompatible, particularly when applied in the context of his definition of literacy which is 'the ability to achieve a desired purpose by applying appropriate skills in a specific situation of engagement with text' (ibid). Before addressing St Clair's proposal I briefly discuss the approaches which he has identified and considers can be reconciled under his capabilities model of literacy.

A functional perspective on literacy sees literacy as 'the mastery of fundamental skills', skills that are defined as such by the logic and needs of capital and demands of the labour market (Giroux, 2001). Teaching of literacy from this perspective is principally a cognitive process which involves the transmission of a set of skills seen as having universal applicability, relevance (Barton, 2007) and monetary value, being closely linked with employment and notions of economic imperative.

Giroux (2001:206) critiques this 'conventional' (Papen, 2005) approach to literacy as stripping it of 'its function as a vehicle for critical reason, as a mode of thought and assemblage of skills that allow individuals to break with the pre-defined' (2001:206). He argues that in this 'conventional' approach literacy is reduced to the 'mastery of skills' which are defined by the labour market and in this context 'becomes the new

admission ticket for the poor in their attempt to enter an economy that regards them as second-class citizens' (ibid). Lankshear and Gee (1997) similarly warn of the danger of learning being driven and orientated by the demands of the market.

Literacy understood from the perspective of literacy as social practice is influenced by the critical pedagogy of Freire (1972) and is articulated in the UK principally through the research and writing of the New Literacies Studies (NLS) (Street, 1995; Barton, 2007). As has been argued by those writing from the perspective of NLS, literacy is more than about being able to manipulate printed or written text but is about recognising the way it is embedded in cultural and social contexts. This involves making 'connections'

> with the community in which learners lead their lives outside the classroom; with a notion of situated learning; between learning and institutional power; between print literacy and other media; between our own literacies as teachers and researchers... (Hamilton et al., 2006:3).

This perspective validates the breadth and depth of knowledge that adults acquire in formal, informal and non-formal settings throughout their lives and the diverse ways in which this is reflected in the ways individuals use text and other media (Street, 1995; Crowther et al., 2001; Hamilton and Hillier, 2006). Understanding literacy as a socially and contextually embedded concept challenges the idea of the illiterate individual which is central to a skills or functional view. Instead, literacy is seen as a socially and politically constructed phenomenon at the same time recognising that some forms of literacy are more highly valued in society than others.

St Clair (2010:31) observes that 'on first glance' these two approaches are 'not very compatible'. However he argues that the model he is suggesting builds on the complementary strengths and weaknesses of each of these and pulls them together to create an effective approach. He argues that his literacy capability model reflects Sen's (Sen 1987) social theory of capabilities in two particular aspects: what people can do individually and collectively and secondly what it can contribute to the quality and freedom of people's lives. This model he argues promotes literacy as a means by which 'people are able to achieve their purpose' and is 'intended to

recognise the importance of people's desires and aims in their use of literacy skills' (St Clair, 2010:34). St Clair appears to challenge the idea that 'the social practice view of adult literacy...is indeed a good and practical theory' (Hamilton et al., 2006:2) because it is insufficiently developed in ideas about teaching and learning. He is also critical of the functional view of literacy because it takes insufficient account of socio-political aspects of literacy learning. His proposal for a capabilities model for literacy, he acknowledges might be dismissed as pragmatic and overly instrumental but his view is that it is better designed to achieve the outcome of social justice which he asserts should underpin literacy policy and provision. His approach however assumes coherence between policy notions of, and ambitions for, 'social justice' and 'people's desires and aims' for learning and literacy in particular.

This idea that effective literacy provision ought to consider a range of theoretical perspectives is not new (see Hamilton et al., 2006:4) but remains pertinent because as has been observed 'in designing policy, important choices have to be made that privilege certain approaches over others and...these choices may have implications at the micro-level of teaching and learning' (Hamilton et al., 2006:5). This is apparent in the Scottish context where the hegemony of social practice has in recent years squeezed out meaningful discussion about pedagogy. Hamilton et al. (2006:11) argue that 'a policy strategy does not necessarily dictate pedagogy' but the example of recent literacy policy approaches in Scotland might suggest otherwise. In 2001 the Scottish government committed to a social practice approach (Scottish Executive, 2001), which has been maintained by funding regimes which require evidence of and commitment to a social practice approach in project applications and evaluations. As a consequence it could be argued that 'social practice' has achieved paradigmatic status in literacy discourse, marginalising and challenging the legitimacy of alternative pedagogy. The result has been that widely divergent theoretical and practice perspectives have been subsumed under the label 'social practice'. Ackland (2010) points out that in terms of discourse what is important is not the meaning of the term social practice but how it has been used. She argues that it has been used to legitimise change in policy and subsequently it has been appropriated by practitioners 'in support of their own established practices and socio- political interests' (Ackland 2010:4). An example of this appropriation is the way in which

'social practice' seems to have become almost a synonym for 'learner-centred'. Appleby and Barton (2008) describe a 'social practice' approach in teaching as about conceiving of learners as people with different and complex lives who use and understand literacy in a variety of ways. They express the belief that 'teaching and learning amount to more than simply "transmitting" or "broadcasting" information and knowledge' (2008:5). Accordingly they describe teaching starting 'from the experience and perspective of the learners, rather an assuming...that people have to fit, or be fitted, into existing systems and cultures' (2008:27). What distinguishes a social practice approach from one that is merely learner-centred is that it draws attention to the inequalities in society which values some forms of literacy over others. In other words 'it recognizes the power dimension in literacy' (Hillier 2006:175) and raises awareness about inequities rather than only helping people to function more effectively within these.

Metaphor in Literacy Discourse

The idea that metaphor provides a device for conceptualising abstract ideas and representing the world (Fairclough, 1992; Koller and Davidson, 2008) is applied by Barton (2007) to understanding different literacy discourses. Barton suggests that the metaphors we use for literacy shape our discourse. He identifies 'skill set' as a common metaphor for literacy and argues that this metaphor contributes to a discourse of deficit in policy and practice. Barton (2007) argues that by treating literacy as a set of skills, which individuals either acquire or fail to acquire, results in the representation of adult literacy learners as inadequate, vulnerable and socially inept. He also observes that the widespread use of metaphors of disease and warfare are symptomatic of understandings, associated with a skills based or functional view of literacy. These metaphors are seen as contributing to the persisting use of terms such as 'illiteracy' and the resultant deficit models of the adult learner. He suggests that the metaphor of 'literacy as skills' in discourse, makes it difficult for governments to adopt new approaches not least because the skill metaphor corresponds with prevailing economic ideology.

According to Barton (2007), the skills metaphor ultimately gives rise to a discourse about literacy learners as socially isolated or more vulnerable than other groups in the population, a characterisation which he refutes as unfounded, citing research by Fingeret (1983) to illustrate his point. Fingeret's research indicates that those with 'poor' literacy are as equally well 'networked' as other adults in the population it is just that the networks are different and more localised and the social networks in which these individuals engage and the literacy practices of these communities may not be recognised or valued outside of those settings. Bynner and Parsons (2006) findings from UK based research is consistent with this view as are the findings reported in the *Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009* which say 'People have spiky [literacies] profiles, with areas of strength and weakness, and a greater ability to use texts more effectively in some circumstances than others' (St Clair et al., 2010:3). In other words it is not possible to attribute specific characteristics to literacy learners since most, if not all, individuals might be identified as such in some area of their lives.

However it seems that this discourse is powerful and, as Tett and MacLachan (2008) comment, learners are often viewed as 'people whose deficiencies have a direct and adverse impact on the national good and who therefore pose a problem for the literate "others"' (2008:664). This discourse of deficit precipitates negative self-perception by learners and can result in an exaggerated imbalance in power relationships between learner and tutor, with tutors often positioning themselves in a 'maternally protective role' in relation to the learners (Tett and Maclachlan, 2008:665). This is a theme that is also explored by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009:xxii) in their critique of what they label 'therapeutic education' which, they argue has the effect of abandoning 'the liberating project of education'.

Coffield (2008) also identifies two metaphors for learning which he labels acquisition and participation. The acquisition metaphor he describes as typifying the formal education sector and summarises as, 'gaining possession of knowledge' as one would acquire an object. He characterises learning within this metaphor as being an essentially individual process, associated with key words such as 'delivery, transmission, internalisation, achievement, accumulation and transfer' (2008:8). He

contrasts this with what he calls the participation metaphor (citing Wenger and Snyder) as a discourse about learning which 'shifts the focus from the individual to learning as participation in 'communities of practice', which are 'groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise' (2000:139). He says the key words in the metaphor of 'learning as participation' approach are, 'community, identity, meaning, practice, dialogue, co-operation and belonging' (2008:9).

Adult literacy provision in the UK is referred to variously, as ALN (Adult Literacy and Numeracy), ABE (Adult Basic Education), Basic Skills and Core Skills. The current strategy for adult literacy and numeracy in England is known as *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (BIS 2010) which replaced *Skills for Life* (DfEE 2001) and in Scotland it is an aspect of *A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government 2007). The terminology, which is used to talk about adult literacy provision, is perhaps indicative of the strength of the skills discourse about literacy in which the ability to read and write is central. As I have discussed discourses of literacy and social exclusion are shaped by the metaphors that we use for them. Skill is a metaphor for education that is used regularly in relation to literacy provision (Barton, 2007) and gives rise to a discourse of deficit, inadequacy and vulnerability (Coffield, 2008). Alternatively, literacy perceived as socially embedded practice is a metaphor which gives rise to positive conceptualisations of the learner (Barton, 2007).

Tett (2006:44) asks the question 'Is it possible to move from the dominant, deficit approach to literacy and numeracy as a way of more effectively promoting social inclusion and justice for all?' Her view is that a social practice view of literacy set within a social justice policy framework will allow provision to make an important contribution to social inclusion. She suggests some ways that this can be done whilst also acknowledging that a start has already been made on this in Scotland. What she proposes is a critical and reflective environment for literacy and numeracy provision that takes account of individual socio-emotional contexts that promotes learning as purposeful and challenging and which takes account of all forms of prior learning and knowledge (2006:49). She argues that learning is crucial to social inclusion but identifies a particular kind of learning that is 'a resource for people to help them

identify inequalities, probe their origins and begin to challenge them using skills, information and knowledge in order to achieve and stimulate change' (Tett 2006: 50). There is some evidence that the tenets of this approach have begun to influence policy and practice in Scotland.

In the next section I discuss the Scottish policy context in which literacies provision has developed and some of the discourses of literacy and associated metaphors and conceptualisations which have emerged.

Discourses in Policy

In 2004 the Labour Prime Minister in a speech to the Fabian Society said 'Education goes to the heart of all we stand for as a party, and everything we are doing - and need still to do - to make a Britain a fairer and more equal society'(The Guardian 2004 n.p.). Six years later, shortly after the election of a UK Conservative Government, the Education Secretary said 'I believe, nothing is more important to the fairness of our society and the future prosperity of our country than getting education right' (Harrison 2010 n.p.). Both of these statements prioritise education as the vehicle by which fairness in society is achieved but despite similarity in language the discourses they represent are not necessarily the same.

I have already discussed social exclusion is a concept about which there are differing views and understandings. These views and understandings are the manifestation of a complex web of influences which shape the ways in which individuals try to make sense of the world they inhabit. Similarly it is difficult to ascertain what learning or education can do to help address social exclusion without first ascertaining what is meant by education or learning in discourse. The discursive practices in which policy and practice is embedded however presents a complex policy and practice landscape. In this discussion I will look at the discourses of adult literacy policy and practice in the UK.

Thompson (2007:84) describes contemporary political and educational discourses as 'a mix of platitudes about individual opportunity and self-confidence and an empty

arsenal of business jargon and psycho-babble about targets and benchmarks, employability and skills, needs and goals and lessons learned'.

In critiquing the English Skills for Life Strategy (DfEE 2001) Thompson says it 'is based on three dubious assumptions' which she lists as 'the oversimplified insistence that the country's general prosperity and social well-being is dependent upon employment skills; that it is most appropriate to put employers (rather than educationalists, for example) "in the driving seat" when it comes to determining the distribution and content of training and its qualification framework; and that market competition, linked to on-going quality assurance, is essential to keep providers efficient and on their toes' (2007:90), an observation which, has some resonance with the Scottish policy and practice environment.

Coffield (1998) was equally disparaging when commenting on the Labour Government's lifelong education policy proposals. He wrote that

> In all the plans to put learners first, to invest in learning, to widen participation, to set targets, to develop skills, to open up access, to raise standards, and to develop a national framework of qualifications, there is no mention of a theory (or theories) of learning to drive the whole project. It is as though there existed in the UK such widespread understanding of, and agreement about, the processes of learning and teaching that comment was thought superfluous (Coffield, 1998:4).

The Skills for Life programme in England was explicit in taking a functional perspective in its adult literacy policy and practice approach. In Scotland however, the discourses of literacy seem to suggest a more conflicted policy landscape than elsewhere in the UK. The Scottish Government has endorsed a social practice approach to adult literacy provision and this is enshrined within a Curriculum Framework (Scottish Executive, 2005). The Scottish Curriculum Framework, unlike its English counterpart, addresses pedagogical issues in literacy practice but does not define curriculum content. These differences in policy and pedagogical approaches within the UK have been attributed to the separate history and traditions of adult education in Scotland and England. Tett (2006:45) observes that 'a more consensual form of consultation about educational developments' has occurred in Scotland and

is evidenced in 'the involvement of "insider" practitioner-experts' in developing policy. She argues that this gave rise to the development of a social practice approach to literacy 'regarded as more appropriate to community-based context of provision in Scotland' (ibid) and also that the development of policy in Scotland 'has been informed by issues of social justice, equality and democracy in everyday life' (ibid). The accusations therefore levelled by Thomson (2007) at policy makers about the failure to put 'educationalists in the driving seat' cannot be wholly sustained in the Scottish context. However, whilst this divergence from the rest of the UK might be attributable to the 'longstanding enthusiasm for national social development in Scotland' (Tett, 2006:45), there remains much in policy which is similar. The continuing attachment to a discourse of skills, with its overtones of deficit with which they are intrinsically bound, reflect the continuing power and influence the UK Government retains in respect of Scottish economic management.

The point that Hamilton et al. (2006) make, that there are a number of versions of 'social practices theory' as it pertains to adult literacy, numeracy and language, may reflect attempts to integrate what is essentially a radical pedagogy into government literacy policy and practice. The social practice approach in literacy is described (Papen, 2005; Appleby and Barton, 2008), as drawing on the prior knowledge and experience of the learner and the literacy events and practices in the learner's life, in order to develop skills. It also suggests that in using this approach, learners are being challenged to engage critically with learning. As it is articulated in Scotland, a social practice approach in literacy provision (Scottish Executive, 2005) draws on the prior knowledge and experience of the learner and utilises the literacy events and practices in the learner's life, in order to develop literacy capabilities and nurture critical engagement in the learning process (Scottish Executive, 2005). This literacy discourse derives from traditions of adult learning (St Clair, 2010) and is influenced by the critical pedagogy of Freire (1972), the Brazilian educator. However it seems unlikely that Scottish Government policy is advocating the political radicalism which underpinned a Freirian approach to literacy. Tett et al., (2006) distinguish 'versions' of social practice which draw on sociology, sociolinguistics and anthropology (the New Literacies Studies perspective) or the psychological approach of socio-historical activity theory associated with Vygotsky. The approach in Scotland they describe as

drawing heavily on a Vygotskian version. This is a view borne out by the emphasis placed on the theory of Vygotsky (1986) in *An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland*. In Scotland, there may be an ideological attachment to ideas about empowerment and recognition which a social practice perspective on literacy embraces (Crowther et al., 1999), however it is most likely that the decision to embrace a pedagogy of social practice was made on pragmatic grounds. In other words, I am suggesting that there was recognition by policy makers that the techniques and approaches, associated with non-institutionalised modes of education, offer useful ways of engaging individuals in learning and offer ways of engaging disenfranchised individuals in the learning process. As has been explained, in Scottish policy, social practice is characterised by an approach which is learner centred, acknowledges and values the individual's prior learning and ensures that learning is contextualised and supported according to individual needs. Whilst critical engagement in the process of learning is articulated in policy, as central to a social practice approach, it seems that the critical element is represented mainly in how the learner is encouraged to manage and determine the learning content and its outcomes. However, the overarching rationale and policy framework for adult literacy provision is no less pre-determined than elsewhere in the UK. What distinguishes the approach in Scotland therefore is not the intended outcome of literacy learning, but the process by which it is achieved. In Scotland, the pedagogic practice in adult literacy learning could be described as being weakly classified and framed, whereas in England the opposite is true (Bernstein, 1975). In Scotland the Curriculum addresses effective approaches to learning but does not define what ought to be learned, whereas in England the Skills for Life Strategy (DfEE, 2001) specified the content of learning. In other words, although approaches may differ, it seems there are no substantial differences in intended policy outcomes for literacy learning across the UK.

However there are many contradictions in the policy discourses in Scotland. Recent Scottish policy statements (Scottish Government, 2008a; 2010c) about education and literacy and the recurring theme of 'improvement', illustrate the discursive challenges in responding to an economically driven skills learning agenda, while maintaining a positive construction of the learner. The theme of improvement, for example, is illustrative of the presence of discourses deeply embedded in a functional

view of literacy where the focus is on addressing literacy 'deficiencies' at individual level.

The *Literacy Action Plan* (LAP) in its subtitle 'An Action Plan to Improve Literacy in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2010) also focuses on the theme of improvement. In its vision statement it talks about 'improving' and 'improvements' in relation to literacy supporting a 'more targeted focus for improving literacy skills in Scotland'. Both of these recent policy documents indicate the continuing prevalence of deficit and functional discourses of literacies in Scotland. Similarly in *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance* (ALIS) (Scottish Government, 2010c) the vision for adults is that

> By 2020 Scotland's society and economy will be stronger because more of its adults are able to read, write and use numbers effectively in order to handle information, communicate with others, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners (Scottish Government, 2010c:4).

The metaphor of literacy as a skill is evident here and is a discourse that is articulated elsewhere in this document where statements such as 'Public awareness of the importance of improving literacy and numeracy skills has increased' (Scottish Government, 2010c:1) and 'Employers must also play their part in identifying and supporting employees who need help to improve their literacies skills' (Scottish Government, 2010c:2) are typical. These examples suggest that the idea of literacy as a socially situated phenomenon is still struggling to be established and secure in policy. However the statement that 'Literacies development extends beyond the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and using number' (Scottish Government, 2010c:7) and includes 'learners developing capabilities in making decisions, solving problems and expressing ideas and critical opinions about the world' (ibid) represents a more critical discourse in which literacy serves purposes which extend beyond bolstering the social and economic structural status quo. The statement, however, introduces another metaphor of literacy which is, 'literacies as capabilities'. This metaphor is used frequently in policy but it is difficult to discern the extent to which 'literacies as capabilities' is distinguishable from 'literacies as skills'. For example in

the policy narrative it is stated that 'We want every citizen in Scotland to have the literacies capabilities necessary to bridge the poverty gap' (Scottish Government, 2010c:1). The meaning of capabilities here is ambiguous. However the claim that successful implementation of the guidance 'will significantly increase the number of adults with improved literacies capabilities in Scotland', suggests that capabilities is being used as a synonym for skills (Scottish Government, 2010c:4). Further examples support this conjecture and these include expressions such as 'literacies capabilities at the lower end of the scale' (Scottish Government, 2010c:8) and 'increase the number of adults with stronger literacies capabilities' (Scottish Government, 2010c:1). The idea of 'literacies as capabilities' derives from the Capability Approach developed by Amartya Sen (1987). It is a framework for evaluating individual well-being, social arrangements and social policy. It focuses upon what people are able to do and to be (Robeyns 2005). According to Robeyns (2005:95) what is important in the approach 'is that people have the freedoms (capabilities) to lead lives they want to lead, to do what they want to do and be the person they want to be'. Importantly Sen (1987) distinguishes between the concepts of 'functioning' and 'capability'.

According to Sen's analysis, 'A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead' (Sen, 1987:36). These aspects are reflected in St Clair's (2010) proposal for a literacy capability model but it would seem that the term capabilities and the way it is used in current social policy and literacy policy in particular suggest the nuances have been lost. In that sense it acts as no more than a substitute word for skills, all be it, a currently fashionable one.

Summary

In theory and in policy, literacy is assumed to be important (St Clair, 2010) and to have the potential to address social exclusion, but like social exclusion understandings about literacy are determined by philosophical and ideological

perspective. Policy discourse about literacy and social exclusion is influenced by prevailing economic ideology and this precipitates a functionalist view in which literacy is mainly understood to be about the acquisition and mastery of a skill set which ultimately enhances employability. A social practice perspective on literacy sees literacy as something that is socially and contextually embedded and that some forms of literacy are more valued than others. It therefore acknowledges unequal distribution of power and inequalities in society and by doing so challenges the concept of illiteracy which is reinforced by a skills or functionalist perspective on literacy (Hamilton et al., 2006; Barton, 2007).

Metaphor shapes and influences discourse (Fairclough, 1992, Koller and Davidson, 2008). Barton (2007) argues that the metaphor of literacy as skills gives rise to a deficit construction of the learner as vulnerable and isolated. However the evidence (Fingeret, 1983; Bynner and Parsons, 2006; Clair et al., 2010) does not support this view.

In Scotland, endorsement in policy of a social practice approach to literacy provision and at the same time, an alignment with a UK wide neo-liberal economic framework, gives rise to contradictory policy discourse. The skills metaphor, which corresponds to prevailing economic ideology, is difficult to avoid and precipitates deficit discourses about learners (Barton, 2007). St Clair (2010) offered a way of reconciling seemingly contrary perspectives on literacy in policy using the metaphor of capabilities. In literacy policy however the terms capabilities and skills can be interchanged in the text (Scottish Government, 2010c), without rendering the sense different. The literacy policy approach in Scotland, is perhaps a reflection of 'a more consensual form of consultation about educational developments' (Tett, 2006:45) which has taken account of practitioner sensitivities and attachment to ideas about empowerment and equality (Crowther et al., 1999). Comparison of the narratives in Scottish policy texts (Scottish Government, 2007; Scottish Government, 2010) and English policy texts (DfEE, 2001; BIS, 2010) however suggests that the intended outcome of literacy provision is exactly the same and what differs is how policy is implemented. Social practice in Scotland, seen in this way, means that it only represents a more loosely framed approach (Bernstein, 1975) to provision in which,

learners have greater autonomy in achieving what are pre-determined outcomes. A social practice approach is therefore seen as an effective tool or method, rather than a pedagogical perspective on literacy.

Section 3

Discourses of Adult Physical Activity and Social Exclusion in Scotland

Introduction

There are two main ways in which physical activity is linked to social exclusion in contemporary discourse. Firstly, and most prominently, it is linked through its role in relation to improving health and health equality. Secondly, it is linked to social exclusion through its perceived capacity to contribute to the socialisation of alienated individuals and communities.

Health and health equality are themes which dominate social policy discourse about physical activity. The demands placed upon national health services by the impact on health of sedentary lifestyles and by increasing levels of obesity have acted as a catalyst for policy interest in raising levels of physical activity in populations. Inactivity and obesity have become recognised as matters of health inequality because there is significant evidence to indicate that low levels of physical activity and high levels of obesity are associated with those populations which are most economically and socially disadvantaged. There is also a substantial body of evidence which shows that even small increases in levels of physical activity can have positive health benefits (Blair et al., 1992; Bouchard and Blair, 1999; Bauman, 2004; Powell et al., 2011). The link however between increased physical activity and weight reduction is much weaker (Gard and Wright, 2001). Dietary habits appear to be the key factor in weight management (Zelasko, 1995; Fogelholm and Kukkonen-Harjula, 2000; Catenacci and Wyatt, 2007; Goldberg and King, 2007). However in policy and popular discourse about health, physical activity and weight management are closely linked.

Physical activity is also attributed with the potential to address social exclusion through its capacity to influence and shape individual behaviour and attitudes, and thus contribute to wider social and cultural policy objectives. The capacity of

physical activity to do this is understood to relate mainly to physical activity, in the form of sport and organised exercise. This role is articulated in one of five principles that informed *Sport 21 2003-2007 – the national strategy for sport:* which stated that 'participating in sport can improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, promote social inclusion, improve health, counter anti-social behaviour, raise individual self-esteem and confidence, and widen horizons' (sportscotland, 2003:7). Claims however, in policy and practice, about 'the proven power of sport to tackle social exclusion, inactivity and obesity in areas where help is most needed' (Access Sport: no date, n.p.), have been met with some scepticism in critical literature. The extent to which sport and organised exercise programmes can have a significant and sustained influence in addressing social exclusion have been challenged, not least, on the grounds of the lack of systematic research and evidence to substantiate these claims (Coalter et al., 2000; Coalter, 2005; Coalter, 2007; Collins with Kay, 2003).

In this section I discuss definitions of physical activity and the discourses which link physical activity policy to social exclusion. There is strong evidence to substantiate the link between better health and social outcomes and physical activity, although the link between physical activity and health is much stronger. Despite the evidence about its value, levels of physical activity in the population remain low. Much of the literature about physical activity is therefore concerned with exploring participation and factors which impact upon it. Discourses about participation are the focus of the final part of this discussion.

Defining Physical Activity

International agencies and national governments have produced formal definitions of physical activity and guidelines about the levels and types of physical activity required to maintain health.

The World Health Organisation has devised a definition of physical activity which has been widely adopted in national policies in the global north including in the UK and Scotland. The World Health Organisation (2011:n.p.) defined physical activity as

‘any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure’. The definition given identified this as including

> leisure time physical activity (for example: walking, dancing, gardening, hiking, swimming), transportation (e.g. walking or cycling), occupational (i.e. work), household chores, play, games, sports or planned exercise, in the context of daily, family, and community activities (WHO, 2011:n.p.).

The World Health Organisation (2012:n.p.) is careful to differentiate sport, exercise and physical activity. It emphasised that ‘the term "physical activity" should not be mistaken with "exercise"’. Exercise is defined as ‘planned, structured, repetitive, and purposeful in the sense that the improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness is the objective’ (ibid). Physical activity is identified as a much wider concept which encompasses any activity which involves the expenditure of energy (ibid). It is therefore seen as activity which could be embedded in everyday activities such ‘playing, working, active transportation, house chores and recreational activities’ (ibid). It could include organised exercise and sport but is not principally seen as comprising these.

The Scottish strategy for physical activity, *Let’s Make Scotland More Active*, (Scottish Executive, 2003) similarly identified exercise, play, dance, sport and active living such as walking, housework and gardening as subcategories of physical activity. Most recently a joint publication *Start Active, Stay Active* (Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection 2011:9) by the Chief Medical Officers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland describe physical activity as including

> all forms of activity, such as everyday walking or cycling to get from A to B, active play, work-related activity, active recreation (such as working out in a gym), dancing, gardening or playing active games, as well as organised and competitive sport.

Zanker and Gard (2008) point out that physical activity can mean different things to different people and scholarship in this area, they say, performs the role of exploring different experiences of physical activity.

Although physical activity has been defined in very broad terms by the WHO (2004) and by the UK and Scottish Governments as including a range of energy burning activities it is most commonly articulated and understood in terms of sport and organised activity. Zanker and Gard (2008) point out the enormous influence that school physical education has exercised in shaping definitions and understandings about physical activity and ultimately participation. These definitions and understandings often reflect a 'sport' orientated interpretation (Penney and Jess, 2004:272) which can be alienating to people or incoherent with the demands and context of daily life . Experiences of physical activity and the meanings that are attached to it are discussed in more detail when I consider participation. Firstly, however, I address the ways in which physical activity is linked to social exclusion through health and through its perceived capacity to contribute to other social policy objectives.

Discourses of Health Improvement, Health Inequalities and Physical Activity

Public health policy interest in physical activity has been informed by several large scale epidemiological studies which have demonstrated either a relationship or association between physical inactivity and poor health and a range of chronic conditions. A strong link has been established between physical activity and better health outcomes (Bauman, 2004; Warburton et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2007; Haskell et al., 2009). A substantial body of empirical evidence exists that supports the view that engagement in regular physical activity has benefits for physical and mental health, and reduces the risk of individuals experiencing a range of chronic conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis) and premature death (O'Donovan et al., 2010; Cavill et al., 2006; Biddle et al., 2000). Physical activity has also been linked to the maintenance of good mental health and well-being (Biddle et al., 2000; Long and Bramham, 2006; Fox et al., 2007; Whitelaw et al., 2008; Biddle and Mutrie, 2008).

The links between weight management and physical activity are less clear. There is a lack of evidence about what works to prevent and manage weight gain (Richardson et al., 2011). Hill and Wyatt (2005) report an inverse relationship between physical activity and weight gain, however, research is inconclusive about the overall relationship but suggests high levels of frequency and intensity are required for weight loss (Jakicic and Otto, 2006; Lemmens et al., 2008). Hills and Byrne (2004:317) also point out levels of physical activity required for general health benefits and those required for fitness benefits may differ adding that 'Public health messages in the recent past have commonly related to improvements in general health and fitness rather than on weight loss, prevention of weight gain, or weight regain'. Despite the limited body of knowledge on physical activity and obesity outcomes (Bouchard and Blair, 1999) physical inactivity remains strongly associated with discourses about obesity.

Alongside discourses which associate physical activity with health and weight management there is also a discourse which links individual health benefits to the economic benefits accrued more widely due to increased levels of physical activity. Scarborough et al., (2011:4) reported that in 2006/7 of the total budget for the NHS in the UK 46% of costs (over £43 billion) were related to poor diet, physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol and obesity. Of this £0.9 billion was spent on physical inactivity related to poor health. Over £5 billion was spent on over-weight/obesity related ill health which included costs from poor diet and physical inactivity. Data such as these are regularly cited to argue in favour of government and personal investment in increasing levels of physical activity. The Physical Activity Task Force (Scottish Executive, 2003:17) encouraged Scottish Ministers 'to adopt a spend to save approach' in developing plans to implement the physical activity strategy in Scotland. They estimated that the economic benefit of reducing the level of inactive Scots by 1% per year for five years from 2003 would be £85.2 million. In addition to direct healthcare costs, physical inactivity is considered to have a detrimental effect upon economic productivity through absenteeism due to ill health. Over the same period it was estimated that an annual 1% reduction in levels of inactivity would produce a 7% reduction in absenteeism and 'would generate a substantial increase in productivity, output and employment' (Gillespie and Melly, 2003:93).

Although research (Townsend et al., 2012) shows that the percentage of adults meeting the recommended guidelines for physical activity has increased over ten years, activity rates remain low. According to the findings of the Scottish Health Survey, (Scottish Government, 2011a) most people are not active enough to maintain good health. Sixty-one per cent of adults aged sixteen and over did not meet the recommendation of at least thirty minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. The Scottish Health Survey 2010 showed that men were more likely to achieve the recommended level with forty-five per cent achieving it compared to only thirty-three per cent of women. Within these global figures, however, there were significant difference in activity levels according to age with both men and women's activity levels reducing as they get older.

The Scottish Health Survey shows that factors including age, gender and life stage impact on people's levels of physical activity. There are distinct differences between male and female patterns of activity (Scottish Government, 2011a) however, data from research commissioned by the Scottish Executive show that the rates of activity overall are significantly lower for people living in the most deprived areas (Murray, 2006). The relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and lower physical activity levels is reflected in the Health Survey for England 2008 which recorded a strong association between lower levels of physical activity and lower household income (Craig et al., 2008).

This is consistent with evidence from the WHO which shows that people in the lowest socio-economic groups experience poorer health and higher early mortality rates and the implication that significant health inequalities exist between these groups and the rest of the population. The WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (Lee and Sandana, 2006) described the different dimensions of health inequalities and demonstrated how macro level socio-economic-political contexts act to generate inequities which both increase individual's exposure and vulnerability to health-compromising conditions and incapacity to mitigate these. Health inequalities are shown in this way to be linked to various forms of disadvantage and are remarkably similar to those which are used to characterise the

condition and process of social exclusion by linking it to factors such as material poverty, gender, ethnicity and lack of employment.

It is the relationship between health inequality and socio-economic disadvantage that has linked physical activity, in contemporary social policy contexts, to social exclusion. In essence, increased physical activity, through its capacity to impact upon individual health and well-being, is assumed to contribute to producing better health outcomes and thus reduce health inequalities. In this way it is perceived to mitigate the effect of disadvantage and increase individual resilience. However, it is difficult to ascertain how physical activity can impact upon health inequality in a significant and sustainable way since its focus seems to be upon the symptoms of health inequality and not the underlying causes.

According to Kawchi et al. (2002:647), health inequalities refer to 'systematic differences in health between different socio-economic groups within a society'. Health inequality, like social exclusion, is a consequence, intended or not, of the way in which society is structured and organised. Whitehead (2007:473) argues these differences 'are socially produced, they are potentially avoidable and widely considered unacceptable in a civilised society'. In order to provide insights into the nature and impact of health inequalities these have been differentiated in terms of health disadvantage, health gaps and health gradients Graham and Kelly (2004:7). The first of these establishes a link between poverty and ill health and the health of the poorest in society; the second focuses on the disparity in health between the richest and poorest in society, and the third associates health with social status and the inequalities which exist across 'the spectrum of advantage and disadvantage'. The Marmot Review (Marmot et al., 2010:15) concurred with this later model and referred to there being 'a social gradient in health' which reflects social inequalities across society. Recent research presents evidence which supports the view that more equal distribution of wealth and access to education results in the better overall health and well-being of populations and would reduce current health inequalities in industrialised nations (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010).

Whilst physical activity can mitigate the impact of disadvantage and inequality the evidence from the perspective of sport provision suggests limitations in what it can do to address the root causes of social exclusion. Roberts and Brodie (1992:140) wrote that if the 'aim of health promotion is to draw the less healthy sections of the population towards the norm, sport will not be an effective vehicle'. Coalter (2007) commented that this conclusion was based on data which firstly shows that sports participation needs to be sufficiently energetic and frequent to impact on health and conjecture that this is not achievable in a typical adult lifestyle. Secondly it was based on the view that lifestyles are not the main cause of health inequalities because (citing Roberts and Brodie, 1992:141) 'even when economically disadvantaged groups were making the healthiest of all possible leisure choices, their well-being remained handicapped by their low incomes, relatively poor housing and working conditions and vulnerability to unemployment'. Thirdly it drew attention to the way in which 'persistent socio-demographic differences in sports participation remain a major and significant obstacle to development of preventative health polices based on increased participation in sport and physical recreation' (ibid). Collins (2003:4) was equally sceptical commenting that the 'evidence for benefits to cardio-vascular health from vigorous exercise…and to self–confidence and self-esteem are unquestionably confirmed; but for most other claims evidence is patchy, anecdotal or open to question in methodology'. He added 'sport can rarely yield economic, environmental, health, safety or social benefits acting alone' (ibid).

Narratives about physical activity and other social inclusion objectives

There is a general presumption underpinning current policy and practice that physical activity, principally in the form of sport, does make a contribution to the reduction of social exclusion (Coalter, 2007). There has been recognition of this in Scottish and UK policy texts. For example, it was stated in *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* (Scottish Office, 1999:22) 'people who participate in sports and arts activities are more likely to play an active role in the community in other ways'. However research into the impact of physical activity provision, in achieving wider

inclusion objectives, has been inconclusive, either because the data is not available or because it is difficult to establish causal relationships between physical activity provision and the outcomes, because of the role of other environmental, economic and social factors which may have had agency in the process (Coalter et al., 2000).

Coalter et al., (2000:1) highlight 'the lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of sport or physical activity based projects' as a fundamental problem in assessing their impact and whilst acknowledging the potential of sport and physical activity to achieve desirable outcomes, the authors emphasise the importance of the relationship between what they describe as 'necessary conditions' (the actual participation) and 'sufficient conditions' (the nature of the participatory experience) in achieving the desired social policy outcomes.

Long and Sanderson (2001) reviewed existing material and gathered their own data in order to establish if there was any evidence that social benefits accrued from community-development orientated sport initiatives. Their research identified that it was believed that participants, in projects, gained confidence, esteem and a sense of empowerment, in which increased levels of social integration, cohesion and collective identity could be achieved and that projects had an impact on crime reduction. Reduction in crime was linked to the effect of diversionary activities but was also related to positive effects of relationship building with young people. Long and Sanderson (2001), although hampered by lack of rigorous evidence, concluded that the impact of community projects such as these were probably not specifically related to physical activity or sport but the learning process that took place. They identified the key characteristics of success as probably relating to opportunities for self-determination and personal efficacy that these programmes afforded.

Morris et al., (2003:2) claim that 'personal and social development in young people can be positively affected' by participation in physical activity and sports programmes. However they acknowledge 'lack of robust evidence of the direct impact of sport and physical activity on antisocial behaviour and the sustainability of any outcomes'. In their review of programmes in Australia, designed to address anti-social behaviour they described the focus of these to be upon developing confidence and self-esteem in the participants and they concluded that their analysis suggests

that ‘providing an activity may be more important than the type of activity provided’ (Morris et al., 2003:3).

Bailey (2005) in his evaluation of the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion concludes that the evidence is limited but that in UK and Scottish policy benefits have been claimed in relation to rehabilitation of offenders and in relation to interventions which divert young people from criminal or anti-social behaviours. These interventions focus upon developing social skills, improving self-confidence and developing a sense of self-efficacy and locus of control and are often perceived as good value for money in comparison to the alternatives. He concludes by drawing attention to the need for more rigorous evaluation of outcomes of participation and expresses concern about ‘many practitioners who seem to regard monitoring of performance as unnecessary’, resulting in ‘a widespread failure to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of sport or physical activity-based projects’ (2005:86).

Likewise, Sandford et al., (2006) complain about lack of credible evidence to support the claims made for physical activity interventions and stress the need for rigorous evaluation of programmes to inform future policy and practice. They stressed the importance of this in the light of ‘unprecedented levels of funding’ available in the UK for ‘pro-social’ physical activity intervention programmes ‘designed to re-engage disaffected young people, thereby aiding their personal and social development’ (Sandford et al., 2006:259). They propose the need for the re-evaluation of practice and comment that professional development for physical activity practitioners should refocus on the promotion of personal and social development through physical education and move away from updating specific sport skills. In doing this they are emphasising the importance of social relationships in the process of behavioural change and underlining the point made by others (Long and Sanderson, 2001; Morris et al., 2003; Bailey, 2005;Bailey et al., 2006) that the interaction that physical activity provision facilitates is key in promoting social inclusion rather than the activity of itself. Building community, they argue, requires working with small groups and involving participants in decision making processes which in turn facilitates ownership and autonomy. Provision must also be

sustainable, avoiding the danger of physical activity programmes offering little more than 'temporary escape'.

The claims made for physical activity in the social exclusion agenda, beyond its capacity to contribute to the achievement of better health outcomes, suggest as Roche (2007:142) comments, 'major gaps between rhetoric and reality concerning the relationship between sport and community'.

Physical Activity and Health Discourses in Scottish Policy

In contemporary Scottish policy physical activity is mainly articulated in relation to social exclusion in terms of its contribution to the health and health equality agenda. I discuss here the ways in which it is represented in policy and understood to contribute to this agenda.

Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2008a), *Equally Well Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities* (Scottish Government, 2008b) and *The Early Years Framework* (Scottish Government, 2008c), form the triad of policy documents which underpin contemporary Scottish policy in relation to social exclusion, health improvement and health inequalities. Underpinning these policy texts is a clearly articulated view that disadvantage and inequality is most effectively addressed by ensuring that people have a good start in life (Scottish Government, 2008c), by growing the economy through investment in people and the national infrastructure (Scottish Government, 2008a) and by encouraging individuals to develop the resilience to cope more effectively with the demands of life through interventions which increase employability and improve health (Scottish Government, 2008a; 2008c).

The Scottish Government is unequivocal in its view that social exclusion is best addressed through economic development, illustrated by the statement that 'The overarching Purpose of this Government is to create a more successful country, with

opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2008a). The triad of policy documents, referred to above, encapsulate a strategy underpinned by this perspective and outline the vision of how this should be operationalized. Addressing health improvement and health inequalities within the wider contemporary Scottish social policy and economic development agenda is recognised as a key part in achieving this purpose and is articulated in the statement, 'Reducing health inequalities is vital to achieving the Scottish Government's overall purpose: sustainable economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2008b:v). In policy it has also been stated that the Scottish Governments aim is to 'not only respond to the consequences of health inequalities, but also tackle its causes' (Scottish Government, 2008b:vi).

The Scottish physical activity strategy *Let's Make Scotland More Active* (Scottish Executive, 2003) and the subsequent five year review document (NHS, 2009) expressed the policy vision that 'people in Scotland will enjoy the benefits of having a physically active life' (Scottish Executive, 2003:10; NHS, 2009a:6). The central aim of the strategy is to achieve 50 per cent of all adults and 80 per cent of children meeting the minimum recommended levels of physical activity by 2022 (Scottish Executive, 2003). The benefits of achieving these targets were described as including 'reduced healthcare costs through the reduction of chronic disease and the potential contribution of physical activity to support the delivery of major social, economic, environmental and community policies' (Scottish Executive, 2003:11).

The strategy was a policy response to the Scottish Executive White Paper *Towards a Healthier Scotland* and was intended to deal with the 'crisis' levels of physical inactivity in the Scottish population (Scottish Executive, 2003). The White Paper established the framework for health and health improvement policy in Scotland. It recognised that health improvement required action to address persistent health inequalities in the population and established that policy needed to address both the determinants of poor health and the underlying causes.

The strategy justified increased investment in physical activity on the grounds that it would result in 'reduced healthcare costs' and that 'the potential contribution of physical activity to support the delivery of major social, economic, environmental and community policies is enormous' (Scottish Executive, 2003:11). It also claimed that physical activity is 'one of the best buys in public health' citing Professor Jeremy Morris (ibid). This claim was supported by evidence that significant economic benefits could be achieved by 'reducing the level of inactive Scots by 1% each year for the next five years' (Scottish Executive, 2003:17). The Task Force went on to urge Scottish ministers 'to adopt a *spend to save* approach' in the implementation of the recommendations of the physical activity strategy. Some doubts about the efficacy of this approach have recently been highlighted. Research (Wolfenstetter and Wenig, 2011:1) reviewed eighteen studies evaluating the economic benefits of physical activity programmes and was inconclusive about their 'value for money compared with the alternatives'. In addition data from the Scottish Health Survey (Scottish Government 2011a) shows no significant changes in levels of physical activity in the adult population in Scotland despite increased investment in this area. However this remains a plank of Scottish physical activity policy.

Since 2007 policy approaches to physical activity have increasingly been integrated with policy initiatives concerned with poor diet and obesity which, together with physical inactivity, have been identified as being most prevalent amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society (Scottish Government 2011a). In 2008 the Scottish Government published *Healthy Eating, Active Living:* An action plan to improve diet, increase physical activity and tackle obesity (2008-2011) (Scottish Government 2008e). In this plan the government stated that it saw 'greater opportunity in making linkages stronger and more relevant' between physical activity and obesity (Scottish Government 2008e:1). The link to the overarching government purpose was re-articulated in the foreword by the three government ministers for Health and Well-Being, Public Health and Communities and Sport as follows, 'If we successfully tackle obesity then we will reduce ill-health which will in turn contribute to sustainable economic growth' (ibid).

The link has subsequently been reiterated most recently in the government's policy programme for Scotland 2011 – 2012 in which it was 'estimated that obesity could

cost the Scottish economy £3 billion per year by 2030' and a commitment to 'work with partners to ensure access to healthy food and to increase opportunity to increase levels of physical activity' was restated (Scottish Government, 2011b:37).

The discourse of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Government, about health improvement, health equality and the roles of diet and physical activity, has been consistent with the messages being promoted by the World Health Organisation and other international bodies. The OECD (2011) has drawn attention to the 'burden' poor health placed on national economies and the 'strain' it placed on health systems. According to the WHO (2004:2) physical inactivity and unhealthy diets are the main cause of chronic illness and premature death. The underlying reason for increasing levels of obesity and physical inactivity have been attributed to significant changes to people's lifestyles (OECD, 2011). It reports that sixty per cent, of an annual fifty six million deaths can be attributed to non-communicable diseases or lifestyle factors. The WHO identified the problem as being mainly limited to economically prosperous and industrialised nations but as being more prevalent in poor and disadvantaged communities within these (WHO, 2004). Scottish policy echoed this commenting

> There are inequalities in the health of people in Scotland which are unfair and unjust, because they are based on social structures and factors such as how much money people have. These inequalities mean that some people are more likely to be ill or have low levels of wellbeing and to die younger than others (Scottish Government, 2008b:10).

The WHO also pointed out that 'Health is a key determinant of development and a precursor of economic growth' (WHO, 2004:3), and emphasised an economic imperative for governments to address the issue. Again this perspective is explicit in Scottish Government policy and is exemplified by comments such as

> The Scottish Government has explicitly supported what it referred to as 'the broader effort to deal with the health inequalities' which included 'promoting the evidence of the health benefits of employment...so current and future generations are able to live healthy

> working lives that are free from poverty' (Scottish Government, 2008b:14).

Health improvement and health equalities policy in Scotland is driven by a desire for social justice but social justice which is achieved through attainment of economic competitive advantage in globalised capitalist markets (Scottish Government, 2008b).

Different policy responses to address health inequalities have been generated by the evidence of links between socio-economic circumstance and health (Graham and Kelly, 2004). One response has been to focus on 'those in the poorest circumstances and the poorest health: on the most socially excluded, those with the most risk factors and those most difficult to reach' (Graham and Kelly, 2004:2). This approach is simultaneously concerned with improving the absolute health levels of the poorest and reducing the gaps in health between the richest and the poorest. Another approach has been to enact policy which has had a more general and widespread impact on public health.

Whitehead (2007) argues that common interventions to address health inequalities are based upon different theoretical understandings of the causes of inequality which Marmot et al., (2010) describes as being accounted for in behavioural/cultural; materialist; psycho-social and life-course explanations. Whitehead (2007) describes policy interventions as operating at a micro, mezzo and macro level. Micro and mezzo level interventions she describes as being about strengthening individuals and communities. These she says are designed to effect individual behavioural change; build social cohesion and intra-community support; and improve living and working conditions through interventions to change the physical environment. Macro-level policies operate at a strategic level and 'are aimed at altering the macroeconomic or cultural environment to reduce poverty and the wider adverse effects of inequality on society' (Whitehead, 2007:475). According to Whitehead (2007) it is these macro or 'universalist' policies which are most effective at reducing poverty and thus improving health. However Graham and Kelly (2004) argue that while the impact of these less targeted approaches is to improve overall health for more people the effect can also be to widen inequalities still further.

In Scotland macro-level health policy includes things like the introduction of smoking legislation, the establishment of immunisation programmes, and availability of certain types of cancer screening and free prescriptions. Whilst for example smoking legislation in Scotland has undoubtedly had a positive overall effect on health, the evidence (Scottish Government 2011d) seems to support the view that less targeted approaches can accentuate inequality.

In terms of physical activity the development of a national integrated transport system to encourage active travel might be an example of a macro-level policy. Another might be financial incentives to reduce the use of private motorised transport, but there is no evidence of any such policies. At a mezzo level, however, there have been local policy responses to create an environment more conducive to active lifestyles which include building cycle lanes, improving urban lighting and creating attractive green spaces. Despite assertions (Scottish Executive, 2003) about the benefits of these sort of infrastructural interventions to increase levels of walking and cycling there is little robust evidence that any of these have had a major impact on rates of active transport and related health benefits (NICE, 2008; Ogilvie et al., 2012). A study of the putative personal and environmental correlates of active travel and overall physical activity in deprived urban neighbourhoods in Glasgow (Ogilvie et al., 2008) suggested that environmental factors had limited influence on active travel in deprived urban populations characterised by low car ownership and where people had less capacity to make discretionary travel choices.

The effectiveness of provision in addressing physical activity levels of the most disadvantaged in society is questionable. A systematic review, of interventions to promote walking (Ogilvie et al 2007), reported that micro-level interventions, tailored to individual needs and aimed at the most sedentary, were most effective. Ogilvie et al. (2007:9) reported that their findings were consistent with the assumption that ‘different types of people may respond to different approaches’. They warn however, that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, targeted interventions to promote walking may have the effect of widening health inequalities, since they ‘may be preferentially taken up by better-off groups in the population’. Micro-level initiatives such as Jog Scotland, Paths for All, and GP

exercise referral schemes have been shown to be efficacious in encouraging individuals and groups to be more physically active but the data about sustainable impact and levels of physical activity raises questions about their effectiveness in reaching those most inactive and those most socially and economically disadvantaged. Mutrie et al., (2010) highlight the difficulties in researching the physical activity patterns and behaviours of groups least active or healthy and comment that research recruitment practices have resulted in the under representation of the most physically inactive groups in the samples and therefore limited the generalisability of the data.

The health benefits of engaging in regular physical activity have been reiterated in policy regularly since the publication of the White Paper (Scottish Executive, 1999b) in 1999. Most recently the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, in his annual report (Scottish Government, 2011e), outlined the importance of physical activity in achieving better health and contributing to the health equalities agenda and proposed an approach for addressing health improvement and achieving greater equality. He concurred with the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO 2004) about appropriate levels of physical activity required for health benefits advising that adults should engage in thirty minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week. Moderate exercise involves becoming slightly breathless. In his report he acknowledged the very limited success of initiatives to 'encourage individuals to alter their behaviour' (Scottish Government, 2011e:24) and asserted that 'simply to focus on behaviour without tackling the underlying circumstances which provoke the behaviour misses the point'. He proposed an 'assets approach' as an alternative way of improving health and well-being arguing that 'it offers a coherent set of ideas and concepts for identifying and enhancing those protective factors which help individuals and communities maintain and enhance their health even when faced with adverse life circumstances'. In reference to the work of Aaron Antonovsky, he argues this approach involves a shift in focus, from the causes of disease and poor health, to a focus on what creates individual and community health – from pathogenesis to salutogenesis. He describes 'helping people to be in control of their lives' as central to the approach. He juxta-posed it with 'the conventional approach'

(Scottish Government, 2011e:25) which 'is based on meeting needs or delivering treatment' and which characterises individuals and communities 'in terms of their problems'. He argues that this conventional approach divests individuals and communities of control 'by making them passive recipients of services' and increases dependency on the state. Instead, he advocates an assets approach which draws on the 'collective resources which individuals and communities have at their disposal'. It is based on the view that everyone has resources at their disposal which can be utilised to protect them against adverse circumstances' and 'promote health and well-being'. Accordingly an assets based approach 'sets out to work with individuals to make visible their skills and give them confidence that they are valued'. He asserts that 'as confidence and self-esteem builds in individuals, neighbours learn to trust each other and community cohesion is built' (Scottish Government, 2011e:26). He concludes by suggesting that asset based approaches are concerned with identifying the factors that support health and well-being, have the potential to enhance both the quality and longevity of life by promoting the self-esteem and coping abilities of individuals and communities. He did not propose the approach as a replacement for public services but rather as shifting the balance from 'doing things to communities' to 'working with individuals and communities to co-create health and wellbeing' (ibid). However the proposal resonates with the neo-liberal tenor of contemporary policy rhetoric in which the government asserts its commitment to 'an approach which supports empowering people to make a difference to their own lives' by adopting an approach 'that improves the capacity of individuals and their families to lift themselves out of poverty by developing their resilience (Scottish Government, 2008a:9).

How to raise levels of physical activity in the population and encourage health enhancing dietary behaviours remains a challenge for governments and one that has been the focus of a large body of research, much of which is focussed upon young people and in the education sector. I next discuss some of the literature about physical activity and the issues and dilemmas it identifies.

Discourses about being Active

Although the evidence for the health benefits of physical activity is strong, the majority of adults do not achieve the recommended levels of health-impacting physical activity. Different analyses of why this is the case have been explored in the literature. Some approaches have considered the wider environmental factors which affect lifestyle and influence dietary and activity levels and other approaches have taken a narrower behaviourist approach in exploring the reasons why individuals are insufficiently active. The former identify the need for macro-level and mezzo-level interventions, which address the underlying issues which emanate from the structural framework of society and, recommend that effort to enact behavioural change are 'supported by social and environmental policies' (Coggins et al., 2007:14).

These approaches generate interventions which are designed to support an environment conducive to increasing levels of physical activity and encouraging people to other health enhancing behaviours. For example, research indicates that the design and provision of safe, green urban spaces impacts positively on the propensity of people to be physically active but also has benefits in relation to mental well-being and developing community (Fox et al., 2007; Whitelaw et al., 2008). The development of integrated transport systems and networks which encourage walking and cycling and reduction of car use also reflect an analysis which understands the reasons for current levels of inactivity as relating to factors other than individual lack of motivation (Pont et al., 2009). Similarly workplace schemes, designed to encourage workers to access facilities or be more active during the course of the working day, acknowledge the wider barriers that discourage activity. Underlying these approaches is an analysis which, whilst acknowledging a need for individual behaviour change, seeks to deflect from a moralising discourse which blames individual weakness and indiscipline for inactivity and rising levels of obesity. Although this is a strengthening public discourse, a strong narrative perpetuates in which fitness and fatness are represented as signifiers of an individual's moral strength and character, particularly if they are poor and disadvantaged. This discourse of 'healthism' according to Crawford (1980) permeates policy and practice and is built on a view of health which is bound in moral imperatives and self-control.

The discourse of 'healthism' is driven by a preoccupation with fitness, body shape and size and involves a 'moral campaign (rather than the biomedical one) against obesity' (Zeiff and Veri, 2009:155). Health and fitness have been described as not the same thing (Zanker and Gard, 2008), but within the healthism discourse they are not differentiated. There is evidence of 'healthism' in public policy discourse about physical activity in policy texts (Scottish Executive, 2003; Scottish Government, 2010a) and in government policy initiatives and media campaigns intended to raise levels of physical activity. Some recent press coverage, about the appointment of a Physical Activity Champion by the Scottish Government in January 2012, illustrates this. Although the role of the physical activity champion was to promote the importance of physical activity in relation to achieving and maintaining health, most of the press coverage (Appendix G: The Herald 7th April 2012) did not reflect this. Instead, it focussed on his interest and participation in 'ultra' sports events which involved marathon runs, in extremes of hot and cold, in North Africa and around the North Pole. This form of physical activity is not only highly organised but also requires high levels of fitness, motivation and endurance making it, probably, beyond the physical activity ambitions of even the most physically active and motivated in the population.

The obesity 'crisis', 'epidemic' or 'threat' (Rich and Evans, 2005) has strengthened the discourse of 'healthism'. However its representations of health encapsulated in the slim body size and muscular shape can have the effect of undermining, rather than encouraging, physical activity since most people are unable to conform to the idealised images and modes of behaviour which this discourse promotes (ibid). The link between physical activity and weight management is weak (Zelasko, 1995; Fogelholm and Kukkonen-Harjula,2000; Catenacci and Wyatt, 2007; Goldberg and King, 2007) and therefore, whilst physical activity may be enhancing health, it may not be having a significant impact upon body shape and size, which is central to 'healthism'.

Physical activity seen through the lens of 'healthism' is also seen as a class issue. Evans and Davies (2008) argue that class is an important issue in levels of participation in physical activity. They argue for example that 'fat' is a 'classed'

issue pointing out that those who have the poorest diets and are least active are the most impoverished and disadvantaged. It is their view that 'nurturing the authority, confidence and the "ability" of individuals to take control of these matters in their lives, and in a way that doesn't either moralise the process, or pathologises those who fail to achieve these worthy things, is unlikely to be achieved unless social class is foreground in our analyses [of physical activity]' (2008:207). Healthism is therefore a discourse which reflects middle class values and aspirations (Evans and Davies, 2008) and dissociates social and economic structures and relationships from the issues which impact on people's capacity to be active and healthy.

Healthism, it has been argued, has been perpetuated by approaches to physical education in school which have been acknowledged as powerful in shaping individuals' views and perceptions about physical activity and ultimately influencing patterns of life-long physical activity. Macdonald and Lee (2010) argue that the discourse of 'healthism' suggests that health and fitness can be achieved unproblematically through individual effort. They suggest that 'healthism' is embedded within many physical educators' personal beliefs and is thus perpetuated in and beyond school with negative effects for those who do not conform. Evans and Davies (2010) contend that school physical education is not working to enable young people to develop the ability and have the desire to participate in physical activity outside and beyond school. They question the efficacy of school physical education in making connections with 'physical cultures and class conditions that regulate peoples' lives' (2010:782). They postulate that physical education may only replicate advantage and disadvantage which is determined by class and which is perpetuated by healthism.

School physical education has been a focus of attention for policy makers and for academic research because of the way physical education in the school curriculum is thought to be well positioned to influence the development of health enhancing physical activity behaviours in the population (Fox et al., 2004; Coulter and Woods, 2011). Recurring political interest in the type and frequency of activity in School curricula and successive campaigns designed to increase levels of physical activity in young people which are targeted upon schools (including the *Active Schools*

initiative in Scotland), reflect this. There is recognition, however, that the influence of school physical education on life-long physical activity can be both positive and negative. The curricula orientation towards sports, games and organised activities are at the same time potentially engaging and alienating, through their historical socio cultural associations, to significant numbers of the school population. Competitive, outdoor team sports characterise school physical education curricula but as Kirk (2005) points out, few adults participate in these activities after leaving school. This suggests, at the very least, quite widespread ambivalence to these types of activities. So, if ideas about physical activity are shaped by school experiences, they may act as a disincentive to engage in later life (Fox, 2004).

Gard and Kirk (2007:25) have argued that in spite of evidence to the contrary 'inference of a detrimental relationship between inactivity, weight and health has been made' and that this has generated a new 'expert discourse' within the physical activity sphere which is drawn on uncritically and sustained by other academics and practitioners. This expert discourse 'has consolidated the link between diet and nutrition (health education) and physical activity (physical education) in the minds of curriculum writers and the general public alike'. This discourse is present in the recent Scottish physical education curriculum interest in health and well-being which, according to Horrell et al. (2012:1), reflects the influence of 'a neo-liberal, globalised discourse of social and economic policy concerned with reducing the spending on health care and investing in human capital'.

Penney and Jess (2004) illustrate the continuing academic concern with the relevance and effectiveness of school physical education within a wider social policy agenda. They discuss the relationship between school physical education curricula and supporting people to establish active and healthy lives. They identify four dimensions of life-long physical activity which they offer as a holistic and evolving way of conceptualising physical activity in the life course which they associate with; work and home life; leisure or social activity, being concerned with health or well-being or with performance. They question how their own 'games dominated' (2004:275) experience of school physical education contributed to their life-long physical activity needs concluding that the 'content and focus' of the school physical

education curriculum is inadequate to meet the physical activity needs and interests of peoples' lives as they progress through different life stages and phases. In doing so they draw attention to the current 'sport' orientated nature of school physical education and are concerned to identify ways in which physical education can be '(re)conceptualised as a lifelong process' which is underpinned by a desire to 'enhance social justice and inclusion' (2004:272).

Research about physical activity has been described as mainly concerned with the 'how and what' (Fernández-Balboa and Muros, 2006) in which there has been 'a disproportionate emphasis on technical themes and interests over emancipatory ones' (ibid:199). Tinning (2010:225) draws attention to the wide range of influences which shape and constrain participation in physical activity, commenting that although school physical education is a key site for learning about physical activity, 'pedagogical work' is carried out by 'diverse media' and in diverse locations. Zanker and Gard (2008) argue that current levels of physical activity in the population reflect that young people and adults are making informed choices, as policy urges them to do, but that the choices people make are not based on scientific research but on individuals' lived experiences of physical activity.

Summary

Physical activity is acknowledged in theory and policy to have the potential to address social exclusion. Health improvement and the reduction of health inequalities are the key ways in which provision is understood to contribute but it is also believed to have the capacity to influence and shape behaviour and attitudes and instil shared social values.

Physical activity, however, is a contested subject. It is defined in general terms as any energy expending, bodily movement (WHO, 2004) but popular and policy representations of physical activity as sport or other forms of organised exercise tend to dominate discourse about physical activity.

There is strong epidemiological evidence about the health benefits of physical activity (Bauman, 2004; Warburton et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2007) but connections made in policy between physical activity and weight management are sometimes misleading and obscure the relationship between physical activity, health and fitness (Hills and Byrne, 2004).

In Scottish policy, interest in promoting physical activity is rationalised on the basis of social justice and good economic sense. Increased physical activity levels in the population, it is argued, will increase economic productivity and reduce the costs of poor health for the NHS (Scottish Executive, 2003; Scottish Government, 2008b).

Despite the evidence of the benefits of engaging in regular physical activity, the data shows that only a minority of the adult population achieve health enhancing levels of activity. In addition, low levels of physical activity in the population are associated with social and economic disadvantage (Scottish Government 2011a).

Policies designed to facilitate health improvement and greater health equality are identified as operating at macro, mezzo and micro levels in society (Graham and Kelly, 2004; Whitehead, 2007). These are designed to effect change at a global or strategic level, at local level or at individual level. They acknowledge differing factors which account for physical activity behaviours.

Raising levels of physical activity, however, remains problematic. Public views and perceptions about physical activity and the discourse of 'healthism' which pervades it (Zanker and Gard, 2008; Zeiff and Veri, 2009) may act to discourage. School physical education is identified as influential in shaping lifelong habits of physical activity (Fox et al., 2004) but the sport and organised games approach, which continues to dominate curricula, may lack relevance for the lives of most adults.

Despite the evidence about the impact of physical activity on health and well-being, levels of physical activity remain low and the incidence of obesity in industrialised nations is rising. Jago et al., (2009) comment that discourses about physical activity policy and practice, and health are culturally, socially and morally nuanced but are dominated by a scientific rationalist perspective. This is a view endorsed by Zeiff (2011), who identifies that the problem with evidence based physical activity

interventions is that they fail to sufficiently recognise cultural values in their design, or in the evaluation of their effectiveness. These remarks draw attention to the way that understandings about physical activity, just like social exclusion, are subject to interpretation which is shaped by political, social and cultural influences and interests.

Conclusion

This literature review has explored discourses of social exclusion, adult physical activity and adult literacy. It has revealed a complex discursive landscape in which social exclusion, although a term that is widely used, is subject to different interpretations. The dominant policy analysis emphasised poverty and related forms of disadvantage as a key causal factor in social exclusion. Various forms of difference such as gender, ethnicity and disability were also recognised as exacerbating factors in the process of social exclusion.

Interpretative frameworks such as those suggested by Silver (1994), Beall (2002) and Levitas (1998, 2005) offer insight to the connections in discourse between ideology, policy and practice. Levitas' (2005) analysis of social exclusion is particularly pertinent to this study because of its contemporary and UK focus. RED, MUD and SID are economic discourses of social exclusion which place different emphasis upon the role of the state, the individual and the centrality of paid employment as causal factors. Depending on the analysis of cause, solutions are variously located in changing individual behaviours or requiring more radical interventions to address how society is organised. Paid employment is identified by Levitas (2005) as pivotal to contemporary discourses of social inclusion and fundamental to SID, however, the literature also indicates that paid employment, as an integrating force, has its limitations and may not necessarily address poverty (Levitas, 2005; Du Toit, 2004a).

The review showed that social exclusion is conceptualised and articulated in different ways and the metaphor and vocabulary, which is used to describe it, acts both to illuminate and obscure meaning. Koller and Davidson (2008) drew attention to the way in which choice of conceptual metaphor delimits and constrains ways of thinking and talking about a topic. For example, using the metaphor of society 'as a bounded space', limits understanding of social exclusion because of the way it simplifies the problem and conceives it as one of moving people from outside society into the mainstream. In doing so it ignores the inequalities that exist amongst the included and leaves unchallenged the construction of society (Judge, 1995; Levitas, 2005).

Adult physical activity and adult literacy provision, like social exclusion, are each understood and interpreted through the lens of ideology and the mental models that people utilise to make sense of their worlds. Underpinning policy, theory and literature is the assumption that both these types of provision have the capacity to address social exclusion. The ways in which this is thought to be affected, however, is determined by conceptualisations about the nature and purpose of provision. Both literacy and physical activity provision can be conceived as tools to reinforce and promote dominant social norms and values. Alternatively, they can be interpreted as more problematic and provide vehicles through which established practices and behaviours may be questioned and challenged.

Consequently, physical activity and literacy are articulated in policy as having the potential to contribute to the policy objectives of addressing social exclusion. This is a view which seems to be based on the assumption that these types of provision offer inherent social benefits. The nature of their contributions, however, is subject to debate and the literature shows that the impact they are perceived to have is determined by understandings about the nature of provision and conceptualisations of an inclusive society.

In Scotland health improvement and health equality are the main arenas in which physical activity has been contemporaneously linked to social exclusion. Strong epidemiological evidence has linked physical activity with health improvement and so, indirectly to health equality and increased social inclusion. Although physical activity is not synonymous with sport and organised exercise, in policy discourse little distinction between them is made. Influential and culturally embedded views about physical activity act both to engage and to alienate individuals. The sport and games orientated nature of school sport, for example, can be either an incentive or a disincentive to be physically active (Fox, 2004) because of the way these have shaped ideas about the nature of physical activity. Perceptions about body image and the degree to which an individual conforms to idealised types (Zeiff and Veri, 2009) of the healthy active individual also impact.

Literacy has been linked to social inclusion in the contemporary policy context, and in the literature, through its perceived capacity to enhance employability. Evidence

shows (St Clair et al., 2010) that those with most developed functional literacy and numeracy skills are most likely to be in work and in the best paid jobs, however, good functional literacy skills do not guarantee a job. In Scotland there has been a policy alignment with a social practice theory of literacy but this is incongruous with the deficit constructions of individuals which sometimes feature in literacy and social exclusion policy discourse.

This review has summarised the different ways in which social exclusion has been conceptualised and understood in policy and shown that these are sometimes conflicting and contradictory. It has also demonstrated differing perspectives on physical activity and literacy provision. In doing so it has drawn attention to the way in which commonly used terminology can be used to mean different things and represent often radically different perspectives. Implementing policy designed to address social exclusion therefore is more complex than it might at first appear. Levitas (2005) raised questions about the kind of inclusion which policy aims to deliver asking, 'for whom and on what terms' (2005:28). This review of literature has demonstrated that in Scotland, from a policy perspective, economic development is the central component in the equation to address social exclusion and physical activity provision and literacy provision are recognised as tools in achieving this policy objective. Although Tett (2006:45), for example, highlighted the impact of involving 'practitioner experts' in literacy policy-making there is little in the literature about the relationship between policy and the perspectives of practitioners tasked to implement it. Practitioners' perspectives on social exclusion are important because they act as conduits through which policy is enacted. They are responsible for facilitating the provision which is designed or intended to have an impact. Bruner observed that 'pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message' (Bruner, 1996:63). An analysis of policy and practitioners' discourses of social exclusion therefore will help to uncover what these messages are, and what effect they have. I therefore identified three research questions for this study in response to issues about understanding the nature of literacy and physical activity provision and the role these have in addressing social exclusion which this review pointed to. These are:

- How is social exclusion conceptualised and represented in policy texts?
- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

In addressing these research questions I sought to contribute to knowledge about adult literacy and adult physical activity policy and practice and its role in addressing social exclusion in Scotland.

In the next chapter I discuss the philosophical perspective that underpinned my study and describe the methods and procedures I used in the collection and analysis of the data.

Chapter 2

Research Design

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the aims of my study and the Foucauldian perspective on discourse which influenced it. I address how this has informed my understanding of critical discourse analysis and how I applied it in my approach to data analysis. I then describe the practical steps I took to organise and implement my research, including a rationale for the policy texts included in my analysis followed by a description of a short pilot study, my approach to sampling, data collection, the problems of analysis and interpretation and reflections about my role in the process.

Study Aims

My aim in this research was to explore policy and practitioner discourses of social exclusion in adult literacy and physical activity provision. Adult literacy and physical activity provision are aspects of contemporary social policy in Scotland which are identified by the Scottish Government as having a role in the reduction of social exclusion primarily by addressing education and health issues. I wanted to investigate discourses of social exclusion in policy and in practitioners' talk about practice. I was interested to find out about differences and similarities in practitioners' understandings about social exclusion and to consider what the implications of these might be.

The specific questions which my research sought to address are:

- How is social exclusion conceptualised and represented in policy texts?
- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

In addressing these questions I hope to contribute to what is known about adult literacy and physical activity policy and provision in Scotland.

Philosophical Approach

A Foucauldian Perspective on Discourse

My approach in doing this research was informed by a Foucauldian perspective on discourse as a system of representation. Central to Foucault's view about discourse is his recognition of it as socially and historically situated and its role as a conduit for the exercise of power. Foucault therefore understands discourse as being about both the construction and the transmission of knowledge.

Discourse for Foucault determines the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about. In other words it constructs the topic by 'ruling in' and 'ruling out' the possible ways of engaging with it (Hall, 1997). It is important to understand that Foucault identified discourse as not consisting of a singular statement or text but as a way of storying a topic through a range of texts, statements and representations. This is a constructivist view of discourse in which Foucault (1972) argues 'nothing has any meaning outside of discourse'. What he meant is that all knowledge about a topic is created by the discourses about it. In claiming this he is emphasising the importance of the socio-historic context of language and other forms of representation for producing meaning.

I want to highlight two aspects of this perspective because they are fundamental to the approach taken in this research. What Foucault does in emphasising the importance of the socio-historic context of language and other forms of representation for producing meaning, is challenge the idea of the existence of such a thing as objective fact. Firstly, using several examples including examinations of mental illness (1972) and systems of judicial punishment (1977), Foucault illustrated the historical and cultural specificity of valued knowledge and practice. Secondly he emphasised the significance of 'the radical breaks, ruptures and discontinuities between one period and another' as a focus for understanding knowledge about and practices around topics rather than a focus on 'trans-historical continuities' (Hall, 1997:47).

Foucault's views about discourse and power have also been important in informing my approach to research and my analysis of policy and practitioner discourses.

Foucault's views are based on two propositions. The first is that knowledge is a form of power and secondly that power resides in various sites and can be both repressive and productive. According to Foucault (1977:27), 'There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations'. Foucault uses the example of punishment regimes to illustrate, the inter-related nature of knowledge and power, and how these act together to produce discursive practices which sustain a 'regime of truth'. The linking of power and knowledge 'not only assumes the authority of *the truth* but has the power to make itself true' (Hall, 1997:49). A 'regime of truth' is therefore a subjective notion of truth, which is embedded in a particular social, cultural and historical moment but, if widely accepted, 'will become *true* in terms of its real effects' (ibid).

Foucault also held a view of power as neither a positive nor a negative force but, rather, one that can be used in either way. He saw power as residing in different sites and operating in a multiplicity of directions. The implication of this for my analysis of discourse as a system of representation is to highlight the dialectic nature of discursive practices and draw attention to the different forces which shape them.
An approach which draws upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seemed useful because CDA sees discourse as a socio-historic-cultural construction.

In the next section I discuss Critical Discourse Analysis and how it has informed the design of this study.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The underlying tenet of CDA is that it is a theoretical approach with an overt political agenda. That agenda is to illustrate how language functions as a mode through which power is established, maintained, exercised and changed. The aim is to raise critical consciousness about how power through language is exercised and ultimately to effect change to the balance of power in society. Therefore

> Critical discourse analysis sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as a social event implies a dialectical

> relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:55)

Critical Discourse Analysis takes the perspective that language 'is not powerful on its own' (Wodak and Meyer, 2001:10) but rather that power is derived in how it is used and by whom. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarised the principles which underpin Critical Discourse Analysis. They see Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an interpretive and explanatory activity which has an explicit set of interests or agenda. It is concerned with social problems and the 'the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures', not with the language itself (Van Dijk, 2001a:353). It emphasises the dialectic nature of discourse and society and culture and recognises power relations as an implicit aspect of discourse. Wodak and Meyer (2001:11) emphasise the 'interdisciplinary' nature of CDA and point out that 'texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies, contending and struggling for dominance'

Whilst CDA as described above accords with my perspective on discourse and its centrality in the construction of knowledge, it is not without its critics. Criticism of CDA is identified as covering 'several dimensions' and are described by Wodak and Meyer (2001:4) to include 'the hermeneutic approach to text analysis; the broad context which is used to interpret texts; the often very large theoretical framework which does not always fit the data; and mostly, the political stance taken explicitly by the researchers' (ibid) In other words the problem with CDA is that it is interpretative, that it concedes that texts can be and are interpreted in a range of different ways and the bias that all researchers have is made explicit in that it is unapologetic about its political purpose.

In defence of CDA, Van Djik (2001b:96) describes it as 'a critical perspective on doing scholarship'. Accusations of bias and lack of methodological rigour are rejected 'as part of the complex mechanisms of domination, namely as an attempt to marginalise and problematise dissent' (ibid). These 'complex mechanisms of domination' are what Foucault (1971) is describing when he explains the 'procedures

for controlling and delimiting discourse' in society. Van Djik (2001b:96) argues that CDA with its focus upon social problems 'explicitly defines its own socio-political position'. Critical and self-critical analysis he identifies as being central to CDA scholarship. The academic rigour therefore in CDA is in its explicit recognition and acknowledgement of the political nature of doing research.

There are different ways of doing CDA. They are closely related because they share a common theoretical base as outlined above but they differ in the approach or methods used to demonstrate the relationship between the exercise of power and language in society. All perspectives in CDA as I have discussed share an 'interest in social processes of power, hierarchy building, exclusion and subordination' (Meyer, 2001:30). The common aim in the different methods and approaches is to reveal how the discursive aspects of human relations creates and maintains domination, disparity and inequality in society. The ultimate and practical point of which being to identify how the position of those most disadvantaged in society can be addressed (Fairclough, 2003; Meyer, 2001; Van Dijk, 2001a; Wodak, 2001).

In planning this research I considered different approaches to doing CDA. Some of these approaches focus upon the structure of texts and are informed by the systematic functional linguistics of Halliday (2004). Norman Fairclough is a leading exponent of this method. This approach applies a detailed analysis of texts, their semantic and grammatical content and structure to demonstrate how power is asserted and replicated through language.

Wodak (2001) and Van Dijk (2001a), are proponents of a multidisciplinary approach to CDA. This approach requires consideration of 'social-psychological, cognitive and linguistic dimensions of text production' (Titscher et al., 2000:155) and it is this approach to discourse analysis and the concept of interpretative repertoire (Potter and Wetherall, 1987) which I have drawn upon.

In the following section I describe the general principles of the approach espoused by Wodak (2001) and Van Djik (2001b) in doing CDA. I introduce the concept of interpretative repertoire and how it relates to CDA and its uses as a tool for the analysis of discourse.

Wodak and Van Djik share a similar perspective on doing CDA. Van Djik (2001a) refers to the concept of a discourse – cognition – society triangle. Wodak (2001) refers to a discourse–historical approach. Both describe these as multidisciplinary approaches which are 'problem orientated' and eclectic in theory and methodology. Wodak (2001:70) emphasises the importance of the contextualisation of a text as a precursor to the analysis and theorising of it. (Wodak uses the term 'Text' to refer to an oral or written narrative). She represents CDA as an adductive research approach, one which is focussed upon exploring inter-textual and discursive relationships. She suggests that the appropriate tools for, or methods of data analysis are defined according to the specific problem or issue under investigation. Van Dijk (2001b:97) meanwhile identifies his way of doing CDA as 'socio-cognitive' and his 'endeavours' in the field as 'defined by the theoretical discourse cognition triangle'. He describes discourse as a 'communicative event' which includes spoken and written text as well as other semiotic media. Cognition is used to mean both personal and social acquisition of knowledge and understanding. This includes 'beliefs and goals as well as evaluations and emotions, and any other 'mental' or 'memory' structures, representations or processes involved in discourse and interaction'. Society is used to describe local 'micro-structural' interaction as well as macro structures and 'more abstract properties of societies and cultures'. He contends that adequate discourse analysis simultaneously requires 'detailed cognitive and social analysis, and vice versa, and it is only the integration of these accounts that may reach descriptive, explanatory and especially critical adequacy in the study of social problems' (Van Dijk 2001b:98).

In this model discourse, society and cognition are dialectically related. Meaningful analysis of discourse is only possible if done in the context of the social and cognitive elements of the triangle. Thus in the critical analysis of discourse Van Djik (2001b) argues that account must be taken of the 'mental models' that people use to make sense of their environment. These mental models are in turn influenced by and influence different forms of social cognition shared by groups, organisations and institutions which he identifies as 'knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values' and constitute 'social representations' (Van Dijk, 2001a:113). Fairclough (2003) uses the similar concept of MR (member resources) to explain how every

individual (mainly subconsciously) interprets and makes sense of situations or environments. There is general consensus (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2001a; Wodak, 2001; Meyer, 2001) that in order to understand and analyse discourse it is necessary to understand their underlying knowledge structures, attitudes (socially shared opinions) and ideologies.

Like Wodak (2001), Van Dijk however is of the view that 'CDA needs a solid linguistic base' but that 'we must make choices, and select those structures for closer analysis that are relevant for the study of a social issue' (2001:99), since a 'complete' discourse analysis is never possible. Following Wodak (2001) and Van Djik (2001b), it seemed then that what I needed to do, in order to gain insight into the discourses of practitioners, was adopt an approach that facilitated an analysis of those properties that best reveal, in their use of language, how literacy and physical activity practitioners conceptualise social exclusion. Van Dijk (2001b) suggests an analysis of elements such as lexical style, topic choice, coherence of argument in texts as an appropriate approach because, according to him, these structures can be related to beliefs and thus to attitudes and ideology.

Van Djik (2001b) suggests a starting point for analysis of discourse may be the identification of 'macro- propositions' of the text. In other words identifying the taken for granted assumptions or 'big discourse' (Wetherell, 2004:12) that underpins the 'small discourse'. This is important because the 'big discourses' or macro-propositions delineate the possibilities for framing and thinking about issues. They play a fundamental role in discursive activity because they are the reference points for the construction of the mental models people use to make sense of the world. The next step in the analysis is 'a study of local meanings'. Again this is about understanding context but relates to the specifics of the text creators 'mental models of events and how socially shared beliefs are interpreted and absorbed into personal mental models (Van Dijk 2001b:103). Analyses of texts help uncover the nature of group representations and of individual mental models and identify implicit and indirect meanings. This is important because these things are indicative of underlying beliefs and ideology which in turn shape and are shaped by the high level or abstract principles which underpin discourse.

Finally a study of the structures of language is suggested as an addition or alternative to the semantic structures identified above. This is because these structures, although having no intrinsic meaning and are often used less consciously by speakers or writers may 'signal the pragmatic properties of a communication' which are not directly articulated. So things like the way a speaker or writer organises the text, the implicit understandings that exist between text producer and consumer (things unsaid), inferences and metaphors used, the lexical content and speech patterns and behaviour such as pauses and laughter. It is at this stage that the idea of interpretative repertoire becomes relevant because text creators may use a variety of cognitive devices to accommodate apparently conflicting perspectives within their discourse. Potter and Wetherell (1987:142), describe interpretative repertoires as 'recurrently used systems of terms used for characterising and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena…constituted through a limited range of terms used in particular stylistic and grammatical constructions. Often...organised around specific metaphors and figures of speech'.

Van den Berg (2004:120) describes the concept of interpretative repertoires as being related to an understanding of discourse as 'a social activity'. He describes how in interview situations people switch between different repertoires and sometimes use contradictory repertoires to talk about a topic. He suggests that the concept of interpretative repertoires can illuminate the different possibilities or ways of talking about a topic and the different resources that are drawn upon to do this. It is this range of possibilities in the discourse production that generates a discursive repertoire about a topic which can sometimes be contradictory. The sort of macro and micro level analysis carried out in accordance with these steps I have described can help uncover 'bottom-up and top-down linkage of discourse and interaction with societal structures' (Van Dijk, 2001b:118)

Van Dijk (2001b:103) points out that 'CDA research is often interested in the study of ideologically biased discourses, and the ways these polarize the representation of us (in-groups) and them (out-groups)'. This implied to me that CDA as a research approach was particularly relevant for my study and interest in social exclusion.

Van Dijk (2001b) points out that how the 'other' is spatially positioned in language and text is indicative of dominant structures in society. Levitas (2005) argues that perceptions about the causes of exclusion will determine the way the problem is addressed. An approach therefore which provided a method of identifying the different ways that practitioners talk about exclusion offered a way of addressing the research objectives and at the same time offered some way of understanding how they connected to societal structures and understandings of these was needed.

In this research I wanted to study the discourses of social exclusion in Scottish adult literacy and physical activity provision. To do this I identified and analysed policy texts relating to social exclusion, adult physical activity and adult literacy provision in Scotland. I identified and interviewed practitioners working in each of the disciplines and carried out a detailed analysis of the data I collected. In the next section I discuss my data collection methods and analysis and describe and reflect on the practical aspects of my research and the rationale for the research decisions which I made.

Practical Approach

My data was collected from two sources. The first of these was Scottish policy texts relating to social exclusion, adult literacy and physical activity. The second source was a series of in depth interviews that I conducted with practitioners working in local authority settings in the fields of adult literacy and physical activity provision. I begin with a description of my approach to collecting and analysing data from the policy texts and which is followed by an account of my approach to the collection and analysis of the interview data.

The Policy Texts

The opening of the Scottish Parliament in May 1999 represented a radical break with the past and thus seemed an appropriate starting point for this study. All but one of the policy texts included in my analysis have been published under the auspices of the Scottish Executive or Scottish Government. The policy text, *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* (Scottish Office, 1999), that was published prior to Scottish devolution, is included because it set out the strategic framework for

the first Labour administration in Scotland post-devolution and was important in determining subsequent policy in relation to social exclusion under Labour administrations until 2007. *Social Justice… A Scotland Where everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a) *and Closing the Opportunity Gap* (Scottish Executive, 2002) are the principal texts which set out the Scottish Executive's policy until 2007. *Achieving our Potential: A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2008a) was identified by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in its report *Monitoring Social Exclusion and Poverty in Scotland 2010* (Parekh et al., 2010) as the 'key' Scottish policy document on poverty and social exclusion since the Scottish National Party took office in 2007.

The key policy texts, which I identified in respect of adult literacy, are *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2001); *Skills for Scotland - A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2007a) and *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance* (Scottish Government, 2010c). The first of these policy texts was designed to 'support the Scottish Executive's vision of a 'Smart, Successful, Scotland' and an inclusive and socially just society' (Scottish Executive, 2001:13) and represented a policy response to research evidence from the *International Adult Literacy Survey* (*IALS*), which indicated that '23% of adults in Scotland may have low skills and another 30% may find their skills inadequate to meet the demands of the 'knowledge society' and the 'information age' (Scottish Executive, 2001:8). The second text, *Skills for Scotland: A Life Long Skills Strategy* was authored during the latter part of the Labour administration but published under the auspices of the new minority SNP Government in 2007. *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance* (Scottish Government, 2010) was published after a review of Scottish literacy policy in 2010.

The key adult physical activity policy texts which I identified are *Let's make Scotland more Active: A Strategy for Physical Activity* (Scottish Executive, 2003) and *Five–year review of 'Let's make Scotland More Active-A Strategy for physical activity* (NHS, Scotland 2009a). The first text was authored by the Physical Activity Task Force appointed by the Scottish Executive after the publication of the White Paper, *Towards a Healthier Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 1999b). The remit of the

Task Force was to make recommendations on a strategy for increasing physical activity in Scotland. The second text is *Five year review of 'Let's make Scotland More Active: A Strategy for physical activity* (NHS, Scotland 2009a). This text represents the response to the Task Force recommendation that the progress to targets for physical activity should be reviewed every five years following publication of the *Scottish Health Survey.*

Table 1 Key Policy Texts

Social Exclusion *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* (Scottish Office 1999) *Social Justice… A Scotland Where everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive1999a) *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (Scottish Executive 2002) *Achieving our Potential A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government 2008)
Literacy *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2001) *Skills for Scotland - A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government 2007a) *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance* (Scottish Government 2010c)
Physical Activity *Let's make Scotland more Active: A Strategy for Physical Activity* (Scottish Executive 2003) *Five –year review of 'Let's make Scotland More Active-A Strategy for physical activity* (NHS Scotland 2009a).

Policy Text Analysis

In analysing the policy documents I wanted to identify the key themes and concerns in the texts. Fairclough (2003) suggests that Wordsmith can be a useful tool for the critical discourse analyst as starting point for the study of texts.

Wordsmith 5.0 is a set of software tools designed to 'look at the way words behave in a text' (Scott, 2010:16). It is used quite widely by lexographers and researchers investigating language patterns in different languages. I used Wordsmith 5.0 software in the initial analysis of policy documents to help identify themes in the texts. It provided for me a relatively simple way of confirming and verifying patterns and themes in the texts which I had recognised in my initial reading of these texts. Using Wordsmith 5.0 software tools I was able to construct Wordlists for each of the policy texts. A wordlist sets out all the words or word clusters in a text. In reference

to the British National Corpus World Edition (BNC, 2001) I was then able to generate a Key Word List for each of the policy texts. Abbreviated key word lists are appended at Appendix A for each of the policy texts. A Key Word List helps identify salient words in a text. The keyness of a word is determined by the word's statistical frequency in the text. A word with a frequency in a text which is statistically distinguishable from its frequency in the reference text is regarded as key. If the word occurs more frequently in the text than predicted by the reference corpus, it is identified as positively key, whilst those words which occur less frequently than would be predicted, by the reference corpus, are identified as negatively key. Presences and absences of words can therefore be detected and highlighted and this can be helpful in identifying themes and patterns in the data. In addition, the Concordance tool in this software suite was useful as a means of easily identifying the contexts in which words appear in the texts. The Wordsmith software however does not substitute for manual close reading and interpretation of the texts but it offers a useful way of initially exploring the texts and a means of launching the process of detailed manual analysis. So Wordsmith 5.0 helped validate, or not, initial impressions of the texts and I was then able to return to the text and manually explore these in more detail.

Analysis of policy text was carried out as a precursor to interviews with practitioners and was useful both in terms of what it revealed about policy but also in illuminating the socio-historical context in which practitioners operate. Prior to carrying out interviews with practitioners I also conducted a short pilot study comprising two exploratory interviews which I discuss in the next section.

The Pilot Study

In this section I discuss the pilot study which I carried out in September 2008. This pilot study was intended to inform my main study. I discuss its implementation and aspects that influenced the design of my main study.

The purpose of the pilot was to identify themes that I might want to address in the main study. In particular I wanted to ensure that I had not overlooked key issues in physical activity provision and literacy provision. Rubin and Rubin (1995:43) point however, that it is not possible to plan 'the entire design for a qualitative project in

advance' and that 'qualitative interviewing design is flexible, iterative and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone'. The pilot study therefore served to inform the design of an interview schedule and to practice interview and data analysis techniques however, as Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest the process was continuous and was refined throughout the research project.

For the pilot study, I carried out interviews with one literacy practitioner and one physical activity practitioner. I also attended three physical activity events which were organised by a local health partnership, by the Physical Activity Health Alliance (PAHA) and by the University of Stirling. The purpose in attending these events was two-fold. The first was to familiarise myself with the physical activity sector in Scotland and the second was to assist in identifying and making contact with individuals in the field for my main study. The events are listed in Appendix B.

The practitioners, who participated in the pilot study, did not take part in my main study however they were very important in directing me towards potential participants for the main study. Locating individuals as initial contacts to begin the interviewing process is often achieved through professional networks (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Flick 2007) and both practitioners in my pilot study were personal professional contacts whom I was able to approach directly. I explained to both, the background to my research and that I wanted to conduct a pilot study in order to inform my approach in the main study. I assured the participants that the interview data I collected would be stored securely and that information provided would not be attributed to individuals. I also sought and gained their written consent to participate (see Appendices C and D). Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes and was digitally recorded. Both practitioners agreed that the digital recordings and transcript materials could be retained until completion of the main study and then would be deleted.

The pilot study was helpful because it confirmed that the key concepts in my study, social exclusion, literacy and physical activity were subject to different interpretations.

Lessons from the Pilot Study

The two interviews conducted in the pilot study confirmed the relevance of the key themes for my main study, which I had identified in my search of the literature. They also alerted me to the need to incorporate new themes if these arose in future interviews (Kvale, 1996). It also provided an opportunity to test and refine my interview schedule as well as develop my interviewing skills.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommend an iterative approach, in other words a process of testing, analysis and refining to interviewing. The benefits of this approach became apparent in the pilot study. I learned that adopting an iterative approach would allow me to make adjustments to my interview schedule which would permit the inclusion of topics that perhaps I had not previously identified. It allowed me to be alert to the possibility and relevance of introducing a new topic or theme in response to practitioners' priorities or interests.

Kvale (2007) sees the interview as an event in which knowledge is constructed. The process of the interview can create an opportunity for both participants (the interviewer and interviewee) to reflect and interact about an issue which may not just reproduce but generate new knowledge. I was alerted to this during the pilot study. The pilot study was also useful in drawing my attention to the challenges of analysing and interpreting the data. I transcribed the data from the two interviews using naturalistic techniques (Oliver et al., 2005), meaning the interviews are transcribed verbatim and include every utterance by participants. However it became evident to me that my interest in exploring the meaning of discourse was not well supported using this technique and the verbatim accounts of the interviews seemed to be a poor substitute for the meaning conveyed by the sound recordings and my field notes. I was therefore prompted to explore methods for representing data in detail so that I could find a more satisfactory way to do this which met my research needs. Consequently I came to view transcription as an integrally interpretative process. I discuss the approach I used for the main study in the next section.

I was however still able, through careful listening and close reading and re-rereading of the data, to code and categorise (Flick, 2007) them and thus draw out themes.

Coding involved interpreting and condensing the narratives by topic and theme (Kvale 1996) using a system of colour coding. By carrying out the pilot study I became more alert to the issues which preoccupied practitioners and was better prepared in advance of the main study to follow up issues and new themes, with secondary and more probing questions. This was particularly important for me when interviewing physical activity practitioners since I did not have the same depth of background knowledge about physical activity as I did with adult literacy provision. Both of the practitioners I interviewed seemed to enjoy the opportunity to talk about their practice and this experience was extremely helpful in giving me confidence to approach potential participants for the main study.

The Main Study

In this section I describe how I organised and approached the interview process and managed issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw. I discuss the reasons for the decisions and choices I made with regard to sampling, conducting the interviews and data analysis. I discuss the use of the interview as a research tool and I reflect on its dynamic role in the research process, I address the process of interview transcription and my approach to analysis and the identification of themes in the data.

Approach to sampling

Flick (2007) advises that sampling decisions in qualitative research should reflect and be determined by the purpose of the research. The key influence in my approach to sampling was to identify how I could best address my research questions and who did I need to interview to achieve this. In addition Flick (2007) also advises against convenience sampling. However practical considerations such as cost, travel and time are factors which cannot be discounted and had to be taken into account when planning my research.

Although it was not my intention to generalise from my findings I was interested in finding a sample which was typical of the practitioner population and to find people for my sample who had experience and knowledge of the professional practice areas which I was interested in. Maxwell (2005) emphasises that sampling should allow for as much variety as possible within a given field and allow for meaningful

comparisons. This perspective was important in determining the geographic focus of my research and in the decisions I made about the people I interviewed.

The Geographic Focus

The geographic focus for this research comprised three local authority administrative areas. My decision to choose these areas was influenced by their contrasting demographics which taken together offered a sample population for the study which closely reflected the overall demographic profile of Scotland. However it is worth noting that while age, sex and social class were adequately represented in the geographic areas some ethnic minority groups were under represented.

Some other reasons for choosing this particular geographic focus for my research included the ease of access it permitted through professional networks to informants in adult literacy and physical activity provision. Other practical considerations related to time and financial constraints. Living and working in relatively close proximity to these areas allowed me to carry out my research with reasonable ease without incurring expensive travel costs or excessive time out of my working day. However sound research principles were most important in determining where I conducted my research.

The population of the geographic area taken as a whole is approximately 400,000. Each of the three local authority areas included in this study has differing and often contrasting geographic and economic profiles. One area is predominately urban while the other two are predominately rural areas but with the major concentrations of population spread between six small or medium sized towns. The Scottish Governments Index of Multiple Deprivation (2006) indicates that the urban areas in the sample include some of the most deprived data zones in Scotland. In the rural areas there are also significant pockets of deprivation as well as some of the least deprived zones in Scotland. Taken together these administrative areas provide a social, topological and environmental structure that broadly reflects that of Scotland as a whole.

Focus on Local Authority Provision

I chose to focus on local authority provision for adult literacy and physical activity because the 32 local authorities in Scotland have been identified by government as key conduits for the implementation of national policy and distribution of funding at local level (Scottish Government, 2007a).

Governance at local level in Scotland is managed under the terms of a Concordat between the Scottish Government and Local Government which was endorsed by the Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in November 2007 (ibid). Under this agreement each of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities separately negotiated Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) which set out the framework for the delivery of services which correspond to local priorities and contributed directly to the Scottish Government's overarching 'purpose'. Improving literacy skills was specifically identified in the list of performance indicators contained in the Concordat. Increasing levels of physical activity was implied in a range of indicators which related to health improvement. Subsequently, in 2011, literacy was dropped from the list of indicators and replaced with a more generalised indicator 'improve the skill profile of the population'. At the same time 'increase level of physical activity' was included as a specific category in the list of indicators (Scottish Government, 2012). I describe the organisation of policy development and its implementation in respect of adult physical activity and literacy briefly below as a background to my decisions about sampling.

Structure of Adult Literacy Policy and Provision

Since I started my research there have been some changes in the way policy and support for literacy is managed at a national level. When I began this research adult literacy policy was part of the remit of the Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Scottish Executive. Learning Connections, a division within this directorate was charged to support the implementation of policy. Subsequently changes in political leadership and several reorganisations have resulted in a number of changes. The executive arm of government in Scotland was renamed the Scottish Government in 2007 when the SNP won most seats in the 2007 Scottish parliamentary elections. The responsibility for adult literacy policy now rests with the Employability, Skills and

Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Scottish Government and responsibility for support and development with an agency of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland.

At a local level, each of the 32 local authorities in Scotland has a strategic and operational role in the implementation of government policy and as such are conduits of central government funding in relation to adult literacy provision. Under the Scottish Executive funding for literacy provision was specifically identified and channelled to providers through local authorities and literacy partnerships. Since 2008 funding for literacy has been absorbed into the block grant allocated by the Scottish Government to each local authority. Decisions as to how monies are allocated in respect of services including literacy provision therefore now lies with each local authority.

Structure of Adult Physical Activity Policy and Provision

Physical activity as a policy area is of interest to a number of Scottish Government departments including education, transport and health. Currently the lead responsibility for policy rests with the Scottish Government's Health and Social Care Directorate. NHS Scotland as an arm of this directorate is therefore recognised as having principal responsibility for health related physical activity interventions in Scotland. NHS Scotland comprises 14 geographic health boards each of which are responsible for the planning and delivery of all health services in their respective areas. The Physical Activity and Health Alliance (PAHA) performs the role of disseminating policy and supporting the development of good practice. It was set up in Scotland to support the physical activity health improvement workforce to implement the Scottish physical activity strategy *Let's Make Scotland More Active*. Its main activities involve developing effective communication between all the stakeholders involved in physical activity and health, sharing information and promoting good practice and providing training and learning opportunities in the field.

In a similar way to literacy provision the 32 Scottish local authorities occupy a strategic position in relation to the implementation of physical activity policy in Scotland. Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) operate under statutory guidance

as the key mechanism through which local NHS Health Boards, local authorities, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders deliver appropriate local health services. These all operate within the local community planning frameworks in which local authorities have a principal role administratively and as conduits of central government funding. The centrality of local authorities in adult literacy and physical activity provision in Scotland was therefore influential in shaping my purposive sampling strategy.

Identifying the Interviewees

I wanted to interview practitioners with experience and who were really concerned in their professional practice with the issues I was interested in. Flick (2007) points out that it is sometimes difficult to know in advance who the 'right people' are to address questions to. In order to gain access to the 'right people' as a first step I contacted key senior officers with designated responsibility for managing adult physical activity and adult literacy provision in each of the local authorities. I identified these officers using a combination of my prior knowledge of local organisational structures and also by referring to existing contacts in these organisations. In each of the local authorities this the same person had responsibility for both physical activity and literacy. I was subsequently referred by them to practitioners who held a more narrowly defined strategic remit for adult literacy or physical activity provision.

My sample included seventeen practitioners comprising ten literacy practitioners and seven physical activity practitioners. In total I carried out sixteen interviews. The interviews were conducted in two stages. Stage 1 of the interview process comprised six interviews and involved seven practitioners. Stage 2 of the interview process comprised ten interviews. The interviews were conducted between December 2008 and June 2009 with one further interview in February 2010.

The seven interviewees who took part in the first stage of interviews each held a management remit for their respective provision and in addition some also had a remit for direct face to face public provision. I had planned that Stage one interviewees would provide access to stage two interviewees. Stage 2 interviewees were practitioners whose roles were defined in terms of face to face public provision.

In other words Stage 2 interviewees were literacy tutors and physical activity coaches or facilitators.

I had originally anticipated that professional remits would be clearly separated in each of the organisations and that strategic planning and delivery roles would be distinct. However it became clear during the interview process that remits overlapped and that to try to distinguish between strategic planning and delivery roles was artificial. I therefore decided that it was more appropriate and useful to identify all interviewees as practitioners and differentiate between them only on the basis of the type of provision for which they were responsible, literacy or physical activity, in my analysis and discussion.

Reflections on the Sample

When I was thinking about my research design I was concerned to make sure the sample and its size was sufficient to give breadth and depth to the study. Ideas from grounded theory methodology were helpful in addressing my concerns. Using a grounded theory approach it is suggested the researcher should continue to collect data until a point is reached where no new information is being generated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). When I reviewed the data I had collected after both stages of the interview process I felt the recurrence of similar themes and concerns in practitioners' discourses and the range of environments in which practitioners worked was sufficiently broad to satisfy me that the sample was reasonably typical.

Organising the Interviews

I contacted potential interviewees initially by e-mail and by telephone to explain my study and enquire if individuals were prepared to participate in my research. My professional networks in literacy provision in Scotland, established over twelve years, was helpful in making initial introductions and in establishing a rapport with potential participants with a literacy background. The value of this resource was highlighted in my endeavours to gain access to participants with a physical activity background which was more difficult because of lack of personal contacts and consequent knowledge to navigate through organisational structures. However I was able to draw on some resources in terms of establishing contact with interviewees

through my professional links within the department of Physical Education, Sport and Leisure at the University of Edinburgh.

Ethical Considerations

In order to achieve ethical research, the subjects' voluntary participation, their protection from harm and their need for confidentiality, must be ensured (Silverman 2005, 20011; Flick 2007). This means there is an expectation that the researcher will take action prior to conducting the research, to make sure that participants understand the nature of the research, that participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw at any time. It also requires action to ensure that the confidentiality of the data will be protected and maintained.

In carrying out my research I was conscious of the importance of ensuring voluntary participation by the subjects, in other words that interviewees gave their informed consent and understood their right to withdraw at any stage (Silverman 2005, 20011; Flick 2007). Rubin and Rubin (1995:93) point out that obtaining 'high quality information' is 'dependent on the co-operation of your conversational partners' but, at the same time, encouraging open and frank dialogue incurs 'serious ethical obligations' on the part of the researcher. I describe here how these obligations were met in this study and have included a college ethical approval form at Appendix F.

Prior to meeting with all of the interviewees, each was sent a letter and a consent form (Appendix C and D). In the letter I explained the purpose of my research and requested that potential interviewees give prior consent for interview. I also explained that I wished to make digital recordings of the interview for the purpose of facilitating subsequent analysis of the data that I had collected. Subsequently, and immediately prior to carrying out each interview, I again explained the purpose of my study and reiterated the voluntary nature of participation in the research. I was careful to emphasise the right of participants to withdraw at any stage. At this point, I also ensured that participants countersigned the Consent Form (Appendix D) which had previously been completed and returned to me by e-mail. I was concerned to ensure that practitioners felt no sense of duress or obligation to participate, particularly where I had established contact through a line manager or other channel in their respective organisation.

On completion of the interview, interviewees were offered a copy of the digital recording and opportunity to view the transcript. All of the participants declined this opportunity. Indeed, most articulated their satisfaction with the interview process, volunteered to provide further information if required and indicated that they were satisfied that the material they had provided would be managed in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Scotland is a small country with a population of nearly 5.3million (NRS 2012). Within it adult literacy provision exists as a small specialist community of practice which, in the main, functions directly within local authority frameworks or indirectly through community learning and literacies partnerships. Physical activity provision straddles greater professional diversity, however, it still exists within a relatively small community of practice. The population size of Scotland and the consequently relatively low number of individuals engaged in adult literacy and physical activity provision emphasised, in my mind, the need to ensure that I took appropriate steps to ensure that confidentiality was maintained and participant anonymity was protected in this study.

Consequently, when reporting the findings, place names have been omitted and each participant has been assigned a pseudonym. In addition some biographical details, provided by the participants, have not been included as these risked the possibility of identification of individuals in my research and the attribution of comments and opinions to specific individuals.

Conducting the Interviews

In designing the interview process I took account of the view (Flick, 2007) that qualitative research with interviews is often an iterative process and as the researcher becomes increasingly orientated in the fields of study more knowledge about the field, and the people in it, develop. This suggested to me that my research approach needed to be sufficiently flexible to allow the inclusion of additional and or other

subjects if these added further insight to the research. I therefore adopted a semi-structured approach to interviewing which allows for a flexible and iterative style of data collection (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are usually conducted with the aid of an interview schedule or guide which acts as an aide memoire to ensure that the specific research issues are addressed (Bryman, 2004). Using a semi-structured approach to interviewing means it is possible to place emphasis upon the aspects of the interview topic that are considered important or worthy of development and also ensures that the interviewee has the opportunity and flexibility to direct and develop the shape of the discussion (ibid). Consequently I designed an interview guide for the first stage of interviews which reflected issues that had been identified in the two pilot interviews but which also allowed for flexibility should new and unanticipated topics or themes arise in the course of the interview process.

Choosing a semi-structured approach to interviewing using an interview guide created both the opportunity for interviewees to influence the nature of the discussion and ensured that specific issues were addressed whilst maintaining a degree of consistency between interviews. The interview guide also had the advantage of allowing me to be consistent in how I addressed my research questions but without being too prescriptive and directing. Consequently I was able to adapt my interview style to take account of the interests of the interviewees and pursue unanticipated but relevant topics or themes. My interview guide is attached at Appendix E

The interviews were mainly conducted in quiet environments, usually in the interviewees' offices or in a small meeting room in the venues where interviewees were based. The digitally recorded interviews ranged from 17.40 to 53.48 minutes in length with most lasting between 35 and 40 minutes. However all of the interviewees continued discussions about the subject of the interviews after the recording device had been switched off and agreed that I could include their unrecorded comments in my field notes. On average time spent with each of the interviewees was about 60 minutes.

Reflections on Interviewing as a Data Collection Method

Mason (1996) makes the distinction between 'collecting' and 'generating' data. The former suggests the nature of data to be immutable and represents the researcher as a neutral agent in the research process. The latter recognises the researcher as an active agent in the research process so that rather than neutrally and passively absorbing data the researcher contributes to the construction of knowledge in relation to the social world they inhabit and specifically to their research environment. The view that the researcher is not a neutral agent (Mason, 1996; Bryman, 2004) and that ontological and epistemological perspectives need to be acknowledged in order to validate research is on that is central to my research perspective. So, the validation of the qualitative research process and the reliability of its findings are dependent upon the researcher, me, engaging in a reflexive process which requires interrogation and exposure of my ideological stance and social position in the research.

I saw my role as an interviewer to be self-effacing and to create a situation where practitioners felt able to expound upon their views in the form of a series of monologues. My questions were therefore designed to encourage practitioners to do this and my role was to prompt or encourage practitioners and be a ‘good listener’ as opposed to engage in debate or dialogue. Like Wetherell (2004) I wanted the interviewees to understand that I considered their views to be important and valuable to my research (which they were) and that they recognised that my aim ‘was not to develop a critique of them as people’ but rather a critique of the resources which framed and delimited their discursive practices.

When I reviewed the interview recordings it is evident that during the interview process I become a better and more skilled interviewer. I became more adept at asking questions, explaining concepts and drawing information from informants. It is probably inevitable that during a series of interviews this will happen. New ideas and themes may possibly emerge as the process advances but it is also probably the case that one becomes more attuned to their presence and becomes better able to recognise and respond and encourage interviewees to develop and expand around ideas and themes which occur.

As I have already indicated, I do not consider the interviewer to be a neutral agent and the evidence from my experience in doing this research supports this view. I see the interview as a dynamic process and I found a model used by Ensink (2004) useful in understanding the interaction in the interview process. He (2004:158) analyses the interview in reference to different frames which he says characterise the research interview and uses the term frame to describe the social and cognitive structures which participants use to communicate in interviews or the roles they adopt. Drawing on Van den Berg (1996) he identifies four different frames which participants use. The first of these is what he describes as 'the basic interactional' frame of the research interview (i.e. the basic roles of questioner and respondent that participants play in any interview). The second frame he describes refers to the specific research nature of the interview. In other words the roles of the participants are influenced by the goal of the interview which is to collect or generate research data for which there will ultimately be an audience. The third and fourth frames he refers to respectively as 'a frame of mutual relation' and 'the topic-related cognitive frame'. In the first of these the interviewer and interviewee are understood to respond to each other in from a wider context and in roles that are influenced by more than just the specific interview situation. The participants may or may not have some 'common social accommodation' (Ensink, 2004:160) which contributes or not to the development of a rapport between them. This frame draws attention to the issues of neutrality or lack of it in the interview process. The fourth frame takes account of the topic related common ground in research interviews which participants share but which can have the effect of leaving things unsaid because of the assumptions about knowledge and understanding which is assumed to be shared. Ensink (2004) proposes that from an orthodox perspective frames one and four are how interviews ought to be conducted on interviewing and that the other frames get in the way of doing research. The reality however is that 'all frames interact' and that the participants adopt different roles or 'footings' and shift between these during the interview process.

I found this framing model helpful in making sense of how power was distributed and redistributed during the interview process. It illuminated the way in which power exists not in binary terms but in a more subtle way as Foucault describes (Foucault, 1977). Being seen and seeing one-self as a knowledgeable insider is an example of

my ‘footing’ in interviews with literacy practitioners whereas my footing in interviews with physical activity practitioners may be better described as informed researcher. The idea of ‘footing’ can also be used to characterise the exchanges with interviewees in terms of hierarchical relationships, for example the contrast between interviewing practitioners with whom I shared a professional relationship and those who were previously unknown to me. Other examples included identification of shared experiences or mutual connections with other professionals in the field all of which had an impact on the interview dynamic and therefore on the data which was generated and how it could be interpreted. In the following section I discuss my approach to analysis and interpretation of the data.

Approach to the Interview Data Analysis

Having collected, or perhaps more accurately generated, interview data I had to consider carefully my approach to analysis and interpretation. In this section I discuss my approach to analysis of the interview data, explaining the methods and supporting the decisions for coding the interview data. I explain how the process of transcription, which I had initially seen as essentially mechanical, became an integral part of the analytical and interpretative process.

Transcribing the interviews

I recorded all of the interviews using a digital voice recorder and then uploaded the sound files to a PC for transcription. Using free transcription software downloaded from www.nch.com.au/expressscribe I started the process of transcribing the sound files I had collected. I initially had seen this as a tedious but necessary process and had therefore approached it in a mechanistic way.

The results of my first attempt to transcribe data were unsatisfactory. I realised that my data – in transcribed form – had lost its depth and nuanced meaning. It seemed to me that the process of transcription was depleting the data. Meanings that were apparent to me in audio files were difficult to convey by rendering to text form exactly what had been said by me and the interviewees. The reasons for this included the use of idiosyncratic language and styles of speech; non-standard syntax,

grammar and punctuation; and the frequent use of non-verbal communication methods. My particular challenge in transcribing the data in this research was how to present non-standard syntax. Sentences were often incomplete and therefore difficult to punctuate although the meaning was apparent from the recordings and my notes and memory of the interviews. Sometimes interviewee sentences were incomplete because I had communicated in some verbal or non-verbal way that I understood the point being made and vice versa. I therefore decided that if I wanted to retain the richness of the data, I needed to find a way to represent it in a text form which preserved the spirit of the recorded data. I had become aware of transcription as forming an integral part of the data analysis process. Transcription it seemed to me was an interpretative process and my subsequent reading confirmed this view.

According to Oliver et al. (2005:1279), transcription methods are determined by research purpose and 'reflect both explicit and implicit assumptions'. The process of transcription is therefore more than a technical process of rendering the spoken word to the page. It is the beginning of the data analysis and choices made about presentation of data ought to reflect wider methodological concerns central to data analysis.

The process of transcription therefore is more complex than it might at first appear and is 'a diverse practice with often competing objectives' (Oliver et al, 2005:1274). As Coffey and Atkinson (1996:137) point out 'how we choose to represent our data is no longer (if it ever has been) obvious or unproblematic. We need to be aware of the variety of strategies available'. Transcribing the spoken word therefore involves making a number of choices. These choices are determined by the purpose of the research and by the subjective perspective of those doing the transcription. The process of transcribing data is therefore both interpretative and constructive and requires the researcher to engage in a reflective process which considers the impact of transcription decisions on participants and on the outcomes of the research (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999).

There are different methods of transcription which broadly can be categorised as naturalised and denaturalised approaches. The former according to Oliver et al., (2005) is an approach which transcribes every utterance of the interviewer and

interviewee in as much detail as possible. This approach is useful when the researcher is interested in how ideas are being conveyed rather than what the ideas are. The denaturalised approach however is concerned with ensuring accuracy principally with regard to the substance of the interview. Oliver et al., (2005) suggest this might include for example transcribing non-standard speech into Standard English or more radically perhaps involve poetic transcription where the words of the interviewee are chronologically but selectively transcribed to convey the essential meanings conveyed in the data (Glesne, 1997; Rapport and Sparkes, 2009). De-naturalised transcription, it is suggested (Oliver et al., 2005), accords more closely with the aims and objectives of the critical discourse analyst whose interest is in the informational content of transcripts and thus it is there that accuracy is most important.

This doesn't mean that aspects of the naturalised approach are not relevant in critical discourse analysis. According to Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) structural aspects of dialogue such as turn taking in conversation, overlapping speech and non-verbal semiotics may convey considerable insight about the dynamics of the interview process and may also be significant in understanding the 'manoeuvring of power' which lies at the centre of critical discourse analysis. They conclude that 'transcription is theory laden; the choices that researchers make about transcription enact the theories they hold and constrain the interpretations they can draw from their data'.

Kvale (1996:166) suggests that the question 'What is a useful transcription for my research purposes?' should determine the strategy adopted and it was in the light of this, my reading and reflections about the data that I decided to adopt a de-naturalised approach to transcription.

Oliver et al., (2005) suggest that de-naturalised transcription is appropriate where the interest is in the 'informational content' (2005:1286) of the transcript and that the 'accuracy' (2005:1277) of these transcripts relates principally to the 'substance of the interview' (ibid). This seemed consistent with my purpose. From a technical point of view, Oliver et al., (2005) also explain that when the interviewer also transcribes the data many of the issues regarding interpretation of data can be addressed using a

denaturalised approach. So things like involuntary vocalisations (e.g. coughing, laughing, sniffing) response tokens (e.g. uh huh, right, ok, mmh, yea) and in particular non-verbal vocalisations (e.g. gesticulations, facial expression, body language) are remembered and represented in the transcription.

Poetic transcription is a particular form of denaturalised transcription which offered some useful insight for me about extracting meaning from the data without being overly preoccupied by the grammatical and syntactical detail of the data. This holistic approach overtly uses the interviewer/transcriber, insider or member knowledge to make sense of the data (Ten Have, 1997). The approach requires listening and re-listening many times to the recordings and noting the sense or meaning conveyed to the listener. Initial listening revealed main themes whilst subsequent listening revealed further sub themes. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that the process of transcribing and coding data overlap and that was supported in my experience.

Du Bois (2006) asks the question 'Why transcribe?' proposing that:

> It's not just a way to get discourse data to use in your research. Rather, the very practice of transcribing has value in and of itself. Many transcribers find that if you put effort and insight into your transcription practice, keeping your eyes (and ears) open and thinking about what you are doing, the transcribing process will teach you more about discourse than any book, article, or lecture ever could (Du Bois, 2006: no page number).

The approach takes account of underlying assumptions in discourse and often oblique references to ideas and concepts made by the interviewer and interviewee. It recognises the interview as a dynamic process in which the role of the interviewer is significant in terms of the nature and the quality of the data collected (Mason, 1996). It also recognises that the act of transcription is equally dynamic and that the process is unavoidably interpretative and thus subjective in the representation of data.

Analysing the Data

Kvale (1996:203) highlights the value of the 'ad hoc use of different approaches and techniques, for meaning generation' in the analysis of interview data. He advocates

'a free interplay of techniques' (ibid), which allow the researcher to get an overall understanding of the data and then go back to examine specific aspects of it. Rubin and Rubin (1995) similarly advocate using a mix of analytical techniques, suggesting that a reading intended to gain an overall impression of the data should be followed by a series of detailed readings designed to: reveal different attitudes to a topic; metaphors used to talk about a subject; the frequency with which certain terms or phrases are used. In this way the themes and types of narrative in the data, used to talk about a subject, can be illuminated. Seale (2005:189) identifies the advantages of using 'computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data', describing it as contributing to the speed and rigour of research through its capacity to produce counts of phenomena and aid identification of deviant cases. However, he also makes the point that computer assisted data analysis, 'is no substitute for thinking hard about the meaning of data' (Seale, 2005:199). These insights helped inform my approach to data analysis.

Rubin and Rubin (2005), suggest that data analysis begins while interviewing is being conducted and that is a view confirmed by my experience. In reviewing the digital recordings of interviews, for example, it was evident that sometimes in assuming my familiarity with the subject matter, interviewees made passing reference to issues, anticipating that I would understand and 'correctly' interpret their perspective. The evidence from my recordings suggests that I was engaged in a continual process of analysis and interpretation, which acted to inform the structure and direction which the interviews took. I have also previously recognised that the process of transcription too is one of analysis. However, 'the final data analysis' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:226) involves the comparison and categorisation of data to offer 'an accurate, detailed, yet subtle interpretation' of the given research area. Careful coding of data is an essential step in achieving this (Kvale, 1996; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Flick 2007).

Data Coding

In coding my data, I wanted to organise them in a way that produced a set of narratives of the norms, views and values, in other words, the discourses of practitioners about social exclusion and adult literacies or physical activity provision.

In Chapters Five and Six I indicate that the data was reduced to seven themes. This was achieved through an exhaustive and iterative process which involved coding and re-coding of data using manual and computer supported approaches. Poverty, culture, lack of opportunity and individual deficit were four themes that were referenced by both literacy and physical activity practitioners in their discourses about social exclusion and practice. In addition my analysis identified that policy and practice were narrated in three distinct ways. The first of these narratives attributes innate value to literacy and physical activity. The second narrative represents literacy and physical activity as important because of the contribution each is believed to make towards individual prosperity and wider economic development. The third narrative is one in which individuals hold the key responsibility for their own learning and health and the state's role is as an enabler allowing individuals, given the appropriate advice and support, to assume responsibility for these things.

My data comprised digital recordings, transcriptions of the recordings and field notes. I interrogated my data in three different ways. Firstly, I listened and re-listened to digital recordings, read and reread transcripts and cross-referenced with my field notes. Secondly, I scrutinised the data using Wordsmith 5.0 software and thirdly shared the data with my supervisor to obtain another point of view before arriving at the iteration presented in Chapters Five and Six. Kvale (1996:208) advises the interpretation of data by 'multiple interpreters' as a method to counter the danger of 'haphazard or biased subjectivity' in analysis. So, sharing the data in this way, with my supervisor, provided another analytical perspective.

My research questions were fundamental to my decisions about coding and recoding the data. Coding is a process of grouping together similar ideas, and themes present in the data (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). By addressing each research question in turn, I was initially able to categorise relevant ideas, concepts and themes in each transcript. Using a system of highlighting/colour coding, I cross-referenced transcripts and identified differences and commonalities and thus was ultimately able to recognise overarching themes, connections or disjunctions in the transcripts. This involved a process of condensing and categorising the data, by highlighting thematic similarities and differences within and between practitioners. Several iterations of the coding

process involved grouping and regrouping the themes, ideas and concepts identified in the data, in relation to the different professional and geographical identities which it comprised. Whilst I aimed to identify patterns and themes in the data I was, at the same time, alert to the potential danger in being too reductionist and thus losing the subtleties and complexities of practitioners' discourses.

Coding of the data comprised different activities which I describe here. Following Fairclough (2003) I interrogated the data for the presence of specialised vocabulary and I looked for words or phrases that were repeated frequently. Wordsmith 5.0 usefully aided analysis, by providing statistics about the occurrence of words and phrases in the transcripts. I also used it to identify collocates of key words and phrases in the data which was useful in directing more detailed manual analysis of transcripts.

I also looked for stories in my analyses of transcripts, a process that required repeated close reading. Rubin and Rubin (1995:231) distinguish narratives and stories in interview data, describing the former as 'straight forward efforts to answer the question' and the latter as being 'designed to make a point'. This approach was helpful in illuminating concepts and themes in my data because, sometimes, respondents described a concept in circumlocutory ways rather than naming it. Wordsmith 5.0 was a useful tool for highlighting the presence of specific terms in transcripts but not useful in identifying how topics were storied through discourse. Analysis using Wordsmith 5.0 for example, showed the term 'learner-centred' occurred infrequently in transcripts, however, manual close reading revealed that this topic was intrinsic to practitioners' narratives but rarely named as such. Indeed, Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that stories often embrace and communicate themes that may be significant and deserving of attention but in initial analysis escape attention. My analyses of transcripts support this view, revealing many vignettes which illustrate, among others, the centrality of poverty as a theme in practitioners' discourses of social exclusion. Reliance solely on Wordsmith 5.0 as a method of analysis would therefore have been inadequate and inappropriate and produced less insightful interpretation.

Close scrutiny of the data also revealed the presence of metaphor in transcripts. By identifying and coding the metaphors that were used I was able to discern patterns in the discursive practices of practitioners which offered insight about philosophical and pedagogical perspectives on practice.

Throughout the interview process I kept field notes and, with the interviewees' permission, I used these notes to supplement the recorded data. The field notes were helpful in drawing attention to some of the variance in my research which perhaps, rather than be regarded as a strength or weakness, ought to be seen as further evidence of the complexity of discourse and the complicated dynamics and balance of power which frame and constrain it.

Finally by identifying themes in the transcripts, I was able to produce a short narrative for each of the interviews, which encapsulated my own interpretation and summarised the interests, concerns and perspectives articulated by the individual practitioners during the interview process. My interpretative narratives are presented in the following chapter.

Summary

This chapter set out my study aim which is to explore policy and practitioner discourses of social exclusion in adult literacy and adult physical. My research design is informed by a Foucauldian perspective on discourse and utilises practical insights from Critical Discourse Analysis These complementary approaches draw attention to the ways in which discourse is socially and historically situated, constrained and delimited.

My research comprises an analysis of policy text and practitioners' discourses. I outline the methods I used in the identification and analysis of key policy texts relating to social exclusion, literacy and physical activity provision in Scotland. I explain my approach to data generation from interviews with practitioners in the field describing how I identified my research sample and organised the interview process and managed ethical considerations. In my discussion I address issues of data collection in the interview process. I conclude by discussing the challenges of

interpreting, coding and analysing my interview data. Throughout, I reflect on the research process and the lessons learned.

Chapter 3
Interview Accounts

Introduction

In this chapter I have presented an account of each of my interviews with the participants in this research. I decided to do this because it became clear to me that as Fontana and Frey (2005:62) point out

> Interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated contextually based results.

The data I present in these account therefore could be described as having been filtered through different lenses. The first lens is one which relates to the interpersonal dynamic of the interview itself and how as Fontana and Frey suggest, the results are the product of a negotiation between the participants. The second is the lens of my own subjectivities in recalling, interpreting and representing the results. In presenting the interview data in this way I acknowledge therefore that the accounts are interpretative.

I have described and discussed the interview process in detail in Chapter 2 where I explained my purpose was to discover practitioner discourses about social exclusion and practice. I asked a series of questions designed to elicit from participants how they defined social exclusion, what they understood the underlying causes to be and how they believed it was addressed in policy and practice at a local level. They were also asked to consider an analysis of social exclusion discourses by Levitas (2005) which is represented in a typology of different understandings about the causes of social exclusion in the UK. Levitas (2006:125) argued that her RED, SID, MUD model offered an analytical device to illuminate what is meant by social exclusion 'because it is so rarely clearly defined' in policy and discourse. As a way of gaining further insight to interviewees' discourses of social exclusion I asked them to look at a summary which I believe represented each of the discourses and to identify which best described the approach to social exclusion encapsulated in their provision. The summary they were shown is contained in the table below.

Table 2. Discourses of Social Exclusion

RED Reduction of social exclusion necessitates addressing poverty
SID Reduction of social exclusion will be achieved if access to and engagement in paid employment is improved
MUD Reduction of social inclusion requires action to change attitudes of individuals to work and learning

Participants were also asked if and how they thought their respective literacy or physical activity provision contributed to addressing social exclusion. In addition they were asked to explain how they knew if their provision had made an impact in relation to social exclusion.

The accounts of my interviews with practitioners are grouped in two sections, literacy and physical activity. These sections are then subdivided according to the three geographic areas in which interviewees were located. In each subsection the account of my interviews with practitioners are presented in the chronological order that they took place. Each interview was assigned a pseudonym and I have noted their respective job titles. I have summarised this information in the table below. All of the accounts begin with a short introduction giving a brief summary of the interviewee's education, job and experience as it was described to me. In representing the interviews I have adhered to a fairly loose framework which seems

consistent with the way the interviews were conducted. However each interview was a unique and dynamic communication process and therefore there are variations in the format I have used to recount each of them which reflect these differences. I have summarised details about each of the interviewees in a table below. The information in the table sets out the geographic area and practice remit of each of the interviewees. I have also included my first point of contact with each of the interviewees and the length of each interview.

Table 3. Summary of Interviewees

Physical Activity				**Literacy**			
Interviewee Pseudonym	Previously known to me	Initial contact made through	Length of interview (minutes)	Interviewee Pseudonym	Previously known to me	Initial contact made through	Length of interview (minutes)
Area 1							
Andrew	Yes	self	50	Liz	Yes	self	40
David	Yes	self	28	George	Yes	self	46
Chloe	Yes	self	37	Miriam	Yes	self	18
Area 2							
Sally	No	Manager	36	Sheila	Yes	Manager	25
Alistair	No	self	52	Helen	Yes	Sheila	34
				Moira	Yes	Sheila	39
Area 3							
Maureen	No	Manager	35	Gregor	No	Manager	54
Caroline	No	Maureen	37	Pat	No	Gregor	54
				Jennifer	No	Pat	38
				Sharon	No	Pat	36

Area 1

Liz (Service Manager – Community Learning and Development)

Liz is a service manager with responsibility for community learning and development. She has a degree in Community Education and approximately 30 years experience in the field of community learning and development.

Liz described local interventions to address social exclusion when asked to define it. In doing so she identified 'reducing barriers and inequalities' and involving 'integrated ways of working' and 'targeting resources' as key local approaches. She suggested that rural disadvantage was an aspect of social exclusion which was inadequately addressed within her local authority area. In terms of the Levitas framework she indicated that local provision to address social exclusion was best characterised as focussing on changing individuals' attitudes to learning which ultimately may have an impact upon employability. She described local literacy provision as being principally about developing individual learning. However she felt that the clearest examples of it addressing social exclusion were where individuals moved from literacy provision to paid employment but she emphasised several times that this was not the focus of local provision. She did however reflect that in the current economic climate there may be greater emphasis on employability as the focus of local literacy provision. She also suggested that 'work helps people feel good about themselves' and therefore contributes to social inclusion. However she was critical of 'current pressure' on women to return to paid employment soon after childbirth and saw this trend as contributing to 'social difficulties in society'. She indicated that this was a 'personal view' and controversial because it was contrary to current government policy and social attitudes.

Liz stated that an 'embedded' approach was the most effective way to address social exclusion and that literacy provision should be integrated into wider learning programmes with a less direct focus on functional literacy skills development. However she also suggested that employers should be more actively encouraged to engage in a programme of Spotting and Referring employees with a literacy need.

She cited work based ESOL learning programmes, job shops and employment targeted programmes as examples of good practice in local literacy provision. She described the lack of opportunity for individuals to gain 'basic skills qualifications' or have learning formally accredited as a 'weakness' of the service.

She identified criteria for evaluating provision as being built around individuals needs, identified by individuals in their personalised learning plans and the local outcomes identified in the Single Outcome Agreement. However she suggested that current reporting methods were inadequate and that there was insufficient evidence relating to the number of people who have either got a job, got a better job, feel more confident or have gone on to further learning as a result of literacy provision. She commented in reference to measuring outcomes that 'we just tend to get individual or group stories rather than hard data' but also noted that 'literacy is the place we do it [collect data about the impact of learning] best of all'.

George (Community Learning Worker)

George is employed as a part-time Adult Learning Worker and part-time temporary ESOL tutor. George studied for a BA in Community Education as a mature student. He graduated within the last five years and has since been employed in various part-time short-term posts for several different local authorities. He recently achieved a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (CELTA).

George suggested that social exclusion could not be 'pigeon-holed', implying that it was difficult to define. He described social exclusion as a consequence of 'lack of skills' and or individual non-compliance with societal norms. He suggested 'lack of skills' was a factor which prevented individuals to 'better themselves'. He also indicated that social exclusion was manifest in an 'underclass' which had a 'dissonance' with society and in a group of people which he described as 'those that don't know how to do things'. Although George used the term 'underclass' he did so with reservations saying 'I hate the word underclass but perhaps there is an under class...'.

George attributed the causes of social exclusion principally to 'low educational attainment' aggravated by poverty. He referred to 'economic and social disadvantage', 'lack of opportunity', 'stifling of ability', 'stigmatisation' and 'being dragged down' as linked problems and symptomatic of social exclusion.

George articulated a sometimes complex and often seemingly contradictory set of views about how social exclusion should be addressed. He appeared to advocate a person centred and constructivist approach to learning whilst simultaneously proposing approaches which were deterministic and principally served business interests. When asked to consider the Levitas framework, he said that he was sceptical about the effectiveness of 'injecting cash into communities' particularly in relation to job creation. He followed this observation by questioning the appropriateness of the public sector in taking the lead in developing individuals and communities and suggested that perhaps 'more private investment...would get skills that business want and not skills that government think business want'. He developed this theme further by suggesting that philanthropic investment in art galleries, art classes and music lessons by business should be encouraged so that the 'cultural aspects of an area can be brought up'. Although he was critical of employment orientated and qualification/accreditation driven literacy policy he also seemed in his comments to endorse it. He described local and national approaches to adult learning as reflecting a narrow agenda, prescriptive, target driven and demanding conformity. He asked 'Who is saying that people have to do these things – some educational elite? However he also talked about literacy in terms of functional and normative skill acquisition referring for example to 'basic literacy' and as literacy learning being 'the first step back on the ladder' in society.

He described literacy provision as requiring a focus on relationship building to be effective. Relationship building he described as central to the 'social practice model' of literacy provision and referred to 'building bridges' and 'basic confidence building' as fundamental aspects of learning. He discussed at length his view that to address social exclusion through literacy provision one must 'build on prior skills and knowledge of people' and he referred to using their 'inner resources' to achieve

this. He talked about using a consensual approach in literacy provision and the central role of 'informal learning' techniques in the learning process. He was however sceptical about the capacity of workers to deliver provision using a 'non-judgmental' and 'reflective approach' and argued that literacy learning was increasingly being driven by factors and priorities external to individual learners.

He was uncertain as to how the impact of literacy provision could be measured or evaluated suggesting that whilst short or medium term outcomes could perhaps be fairly easily identified longer term effects were much more difficult to monitor.

Miriam (Community Learning Assistant)

Miriam is employed as a part-time Adult Literacy Worker. She studied for a BA in Community Education as a mature student and subsequently has been employed for approximately six years. Miriam has completed the Introductory Training in Adult Literacy Learning (ITALL) which is a training programme for new adult literacy tutors developed by Learning Connections in Scotland and which takes a social practice perspective on teaching and learning adult literacy. She had also recently achieved a post-graduate diploma in literacy for adults with special needs.

Miriam when asked to define social exclusion talked about it in terms of individuals 'excluded from taking part in society' and described it as being experienced in different ways. She cited 'rural isolation', 'lack of education', 'lack of confidence' and encountering 'general barriers to learning' as symptomatic of social exclusion. When discussing the cause of social exclusion she said it related to poverty but suggested that 'fundamentally it comes down to lack of confidence and self esteem' asserting that 'when people have both [confidence and self esteem] they would take themselves forward'. In relation to the Levitas Framework, her view was that her employer regarded social exclusion as an economic problem and consequently regarded the solution as 'getting people into jobs and off benefits'. She commented that recently she had observed an 'increased emphasis' on 'the economic side of things' which equated to more pressure on learners to be looking for paid employment and developing independent living skills.

She said that she believed that literacy provision did address social exclusion because it dealt not only with 'practical issues' but also with 'the whole person' and 'the emotional issues'. She referred to 'the way we work' as important in addressing social exclusion and expanded by describing the provision as being built around 'what people want to do', 'where they are in themselves', 'person centred' and as involving 'dialogue with the learner'. She explained literacy provision was effective in addressing social exclusion because it was concerned with 'empowering people' and 'encouraging people to believe in themselves'. She described giving positive feedback and support to learners to help them recognise their own progress as key techniques she used.

When asked how she knew if literacy provision made an impact in relation to social exclusion she described changes in individual behaviour for example learners becoming 'more outgoing, more communicative', more independent and demonstrating 'improved social skills'. However she indicated that the increasing focus on employment skills meant only 'lip-service' was paid to 'other things' and that these impacts were valued by her employer only if they could be linked to measures which indicated progression into paid employment or other education provision.

Area 2

Sheila (Adult Learning Manager)

Sheila manages her local authority adult learning provision which includes adult literacy. She has a degree in Community Education and has approximately 25 years experience working in various community learning and development roles.

Sheila talked about social exclusion as being a consequence of deprivation. She referred to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as an indicator of social exclusion and identified economic, educational and geographic disadvantage as symptomatic. She expanded by explaining that deprivation may relate to the area in which individuals lived. She also suggested that individuals or groups may experience social exclusion because they belonged to a particular 'community of

interest'. She identified the cause of social exclusion as relating principally to poverty. However she stressed in her analysis 'we are not just talking about financial poverty, we are talking about poverty of choices and poverty of aspiration'.

In terms of the Levitas framework she described her authority as adopting 'a holistic approach' saying 'by tackling the different causes [of social exclusion] that is where change will come'. However she also commented that since 2007 and the Scottish Parliamentary elections there had been a much greater policy emphasis upon 'the economic' and this had meant that the solution to deprivation and poverty was increasingly being linked to employment which she thought was exemplified in *Skills for Scotland - A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government 2007a). She thought that literacy provision had a role in addressing social exclusion and described engagement with literacy learning as 'enhancing employability'. However she described individuals as being at 'different stages in the pipeline' and explained that 'the end outcome' of engaging with literacy provision 'won't necessarily be a job'.

She described the approach to literacy provision as adhering to 'the social practice model' and observed that 'there has been huge support' in government and by civil servants for this approach. She reflected that the approach 'means you have the scope to shape how you do it' since the Scottish adult literacy curriculum framework unlike its English counterpart did not specify curriculum content. She described the approach used as being 'very much a response to individuals and sometimes groups' needs expressed through discussion and in Individual Learning Plans. In her descriptions of local literacy provision she highlighted engagement techniques used with young adults and the need to 'get people interested'. She also emphasised the diverse nature of provision and ways of working referring to 'cross-service working', area and issue based approaches.

When asked how she measured the impact of literacy provision, she cited the National Outcomes (Scottish Government 2007a) and in particular the target to reduce the number of adults with severe literacy and numeracy difficulties. She explained provision was evaluated against the criteria identified in *Delivering*

Change which she listed as increase in confidence, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens. She described these criteria as being 'not a million miles apart' from individuals' learning goals. However, she acknowledged that since the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary elections there had been 'more emphasis on the economic' and thus employability as an outcome of provision.

Helen (Team Leader – Adult Basic Education)

Helen has a B. Ed in primary teaching but had 'never worked as a teacher'. She gained a post-graduate secretarial qualification before working for an employment training agency prior to her current role as a literacy practitioner.

She thought defining social exclusion was difficult saying that 'it's hard to put my finger on any of this'. She thought social exclusion was difficult to conceptualise as something 'concrete' and described it as being about 'lack of rights' or 'lack of ability to access services'. But she reflected it was more than simply not being able to access health or education services and related it to a 'lack of freedom to make choices and live independently and safely without outside interference'.

She described social exclusion as mainly arising from 'society's preconceived ideas' about minority groups and referred to 'stereo-types' influencing attitudes and not being based on individuals 'own merits'. She thought social exclusion may relate to a range of factors including 'a lifestyle issue, a marriage difficulty, mental health'. She reflected that 'there are lots of reasons' for social exclusion.

Throughout she emphasised discriminatory attitudes as being significant in causing social exclusion. She repeatedly referred to 'views', 'abilities', 'race', and 'beliefs' and emphasising that one should 'look at the person not the circumstances they are surrounded by' and that personal and economic circumstances should 'not exclude anyone from a learning point of view'. She was particularly preoccupied with issues of social exclusion relating to ethnicity and considered it to be a long term problem with no immediate solutions.

She considered literacy provision addressed social exclusion in that it supported individuals ‘to become more confident and develop self esteem’. Her role in this was about reducing stigma associated with ‘poor literacy skills’. She talked about the aim of provision as being about building the capacity of people to be ‘more effective as individuals in their family and working lives’ and described what she did as supporting people ‘to manage their lives better, budget better and improve the life-style that they have’.

Relationship and confidence building was described as fundamental to meaningful learning. She described the approach she used in her work as being ‘learner-centred’ and ‘learner lead’. She reflected that an important part of her work involved encouraging learners to work together and co-operatively. She also thought it was very important that learning was contextualised and that an insight into the learner’s needs and circumstances was required if learning was to be effective.
She did not consider provision had much effect on poverty in the short term however she suggested that longer term individual economic benefits may accrue related to improved access to education and ‘better paid jobs’.

She referred to the impact of literacy learning as sometimes being ‘life changing’ referring to ‘tiny little things’ having a significant impact and ‘opening up a whole new life’. She concluded by saying that not all learners will ‘go off and achieve great things’ however she said if they ‘go off feeling more confident and able to manage their everyday life’ that is a success. She said that she thought there was considerable congruity between national, local and personal measures of literacy provision impact but considered qualitative data collected in dialogue with learners the most useful and insightful about the impact of provision.

Moira (Senior Community Learning Worker)

Moira had a remit for youth literacies. She is one of three senior workers in the literacy team. Moira has a degree in Psychology and a post-graduate Diploma in Community Education. Moira has been involved in literacy work for approximately seven years.

Moira described social exclusion as a situation where individuals are deprived of opportunities 'relevant to themselves' and 'knowing what the opportunities are and being able to access them. Moira talked about 'inaccessibility of services' and individuals 'not getting the wealth of opportunities others take for granted'. Moira thought that poverty was 'a key issue' in social exclusion and she described the causes as being 'multitudinous'.

She described the reasons why individuals might experience social exclusion as broadly falling into two categories, 'individual issues' and 'geographical issues'. Individual issues included 'personal', 'health', and 'mental health'. She suggested that often services were difficult to access because they were too geographically distant or because they were 'not geared' to individual needs. She thought that individuals were often aware that they were experiencing social exclusion particularly when they could not access services but she thought that isolated individuals such as some people with mental health issues might not recognise this. She also said that that 'low literacy skills' was sometimes a factor in social exclusion and described how 'difficulties with literacy' meant that some young people were unable to participate in school life and were 'labelled', 'stigmatised' and ultimately excluded.

Moira said that 'improving literacy' could 'go some way to address disadvantage' and lead to individuals being 'more included' or 'at least having their voice heard'. She explained that 'a lot of our work is about getting people's confidence levels up' and she also described provision as 'giving people positive learning experiences'. She argued that if individuals, exemplified by those she worked with 'repeatedly had negative learning experiences' then it may lead to exclusion because individuals are

reluctant to ‘put themselves in that position again’. She was referring in particular to young people who had negative experiences of schooling.

When describing local literacy provision she explained in reference to the Levitas Framework that ‘employment doesn’t dictate what we do’ because the target group was ‘people with low levels of skill’. She referred to individuals the service engaged with as having a considerable ‘distance to travel before they would be ready for college or work’ and she described ‘progress’ as ‘out to the sides or individuals accessing other community based learning’.

When asked to describe how she evaluated the impact of provision she cited a range of mechanisms to ‘check what progress people are making’. She referred to achievement of goals set out in each person’s individual learning plan and she also talked about measuring increase in confidence levels and using a tool ‘Catching Confidence’ designed to measure change in various aspects of individuals’ lives over a specific time period. She explained that approaches to evaluation were designed to assess how provision impacted on ‘other areas of life’ including work, family and relationships. She observed however, that since individuals were subject to a range of influences and experiences beyond literacy provision, it was difficult to determine if the changes detected could be directly attributed to literacy provision.

Area 3

Gregor (Community Learning and Development Officer) and
Pat (Adult Literacies Co-ordinator)

Gregor and Pat were interviewed together. Gregor had invited Pat to join us because he considered that she had a more direct operational responsibility for literacy provision. Gregor is Pat’s line manager.

Gregor did not define social exclusion but talked about ‘reducing inequalities in society and making it possible for the least advantaged groups to be supported, engaged and participating’ in the community. He defined community as being identified either by interest or geography. He observed that ‘previous administrations

had a clearer focus on poverty than perhaps this one has' reflecting that 'broad understandings about social exclusion remain consistent' but the focus of political attention is always changing.

Pat commented that the causes of social exclusion are fluid and that 'inequalities change'. Gregor developed this point by explaining that 'what does change is the nature of communities' and that this has an impact upon the way social exclusion needs to addressed. He illustrated by referring to the recent growth in the number of international and European workers in the area saying 'there are equalities issues to do with nationality rather than race which weren't there before'.

With reference to the Levitas Framework Gregor indicated that dealing with poverty 'is particularly critical' in addressing social exclusion but that 'there are other structural barriers' which also need to be addressed. He commented that 'work is fairly critical' for most although not all types of exclusion but concluded that policy in his local authority was 'closer' to MUD analysis of social exclusion. However he added that there were a range of interventions and mechanisms which were about 'better enabling people to access paid employment'.

He also commented that locally issues in relation to social exclusion and work were 'not necessarily about access...but about low paid or seasonal work' adding 'although employment levels may be high income levels may not'. He said that 'being in employment does a number of things in terms of exclusion'. He said that 'it increases social contact' but that 'it doesn't fully address questions of poverty' adding 'there are quite poor people who are working'.

When discussing the role of literacy provision in addressing social exclusion Gregor said 'we still have challenges with partners in terms of understanding a social practice approach'. He said that despite work with other service providers to raise awareness literacies often continues to be perceived as 'you can't read or write' and therefore is not seen as a priority because their view is 'we don't have people like that'.

Pat talked about literacy provision as being ‘inclusive’ and designed to ‘make connections to those who might not participate’. She described provision as being ‘a targeted approach to bringing people in’. Target groups included young unemployed and individuals in the youth and criminal justice system. Pat cited an ‘offenders’ literacies programme’ as an example of this type of provision. Gregor expanded on this topic by saying that ‘learners do not fall neatly into one category’. He explained that individuals engaging or targeted by the service ‘may well be unemployed but they may also have issues around substance misuse or offending behaviour’ so previous attempts to develop ‘discrete literacies programmes didn’t take us far’. He explained that currently what the provision attempts to do is develop a ‘web which reaches out and creates engagement and initial opportunities to progress into core literacies’.

Pat described the local literacy provision as ‘forward thinking’, and being at ‘the forefront of developments in Scotland’. She also referred to using a ‘social practice approach’ in literacies provision and characterising it as ‘very pure’. When asked to define what she meant by this she explained that ‘people come in and learn what they need to learn’ and that ‘the critical thing’ underpinning the approach ‘is to ask people Why did you come here today? What was it that made you make that decision? What was it in your life that made you think I’ve got to do something about this?’ She went on to explain that this information provided ‘the starting point’ for ‘how we approach our work’. Gregor expanded on Pat’s remarks by explaining that the approach involved ‘starting from real social and family issues’ and ‘understanding how people use and apply their capabilities in a range of social settings’. He also pointed out however that ‘the notion of a social practice view of literacies is not one that is embedded in communities’. He reflected that ‘folk have quite old fashioned views of literacy and numeracy in the world’ and that a great deal of ‘stigma’ continues to be attached to individuals who lack functional skills. This he believed was ‘a constant challenge’ for professionals ‘in reaching out and engaging with people who experience exclusion’ where ‘literacy might be one of the factors that is contributing to...or at the heart’ of the problem.

When asked about the criteria used to measure the impact of the provision, Gregor referred to *How Good is our Community Learning and Development* (HMIE 2006) evaluation framework as a tool for evaluation and commented that the service was 'much better at assessing the intermediate outcomes'. He suggested 'a need to be careful' that the service did not 'oversell the impact of literacies' on the wider social inclusion agenda. He said 'If you can get people to the point where they are more confident as people and more confident as learners they are in the position to move on. But, they may be some steps away from securing the kind of employment they want and becoming engaged and included in other ways'. He also referred to the National Indicators mentioning specifically the indicator '*Reduce Number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems'.* He described the way the indicator was 'framed' as 'both interesting and difficult'. He suggested it would be possible to 'find out the number of people...who improve their literacies' as a result of engaging with the service however he was sceptical about the impact of this on achieving national targets. He said there were 'lots of pieces of conflicting and contradictory evidence' about the level of literacy and numeracy skills amongst school leavers entering the adult population. He concluded that 'wider evaluation remains a challenge and to do it more than superficially is quite a demanding task'.

Jennifer (Literacy Tutor)

Jennifer has a degree in social anthropology and linguistics and a Postgraduate Diploma in Community Education. She has worked in the field for over 18 years.

When asked to define social exclusion Jennifer referred to 'people who have a lot of different disadvantages' and who 'can't access what other people get easily in terms of jobs, education and healthcare'. She described the experience of social exclusion as being 'very hurtful' and as having a lifelong impact on people's lives. She said 'it affects how they feel about themselves and increasingly where they live'.

She identified the cause of social exclusion as relating principally to 'material poverty'. She expanded on this point by explaining that other factors did contribute to social exclusion but for example mental ill-health, often a contributory factor,

may be experienced and dealt with differently depending upon individual economic circumstances. She also said social exclusion could be precipitated by 'lack of access to resources' and 'being perceived in certain ways and being branded'. This she believed to be often a consequence of the 'polarisation' of society and it becoming 'not as inclusive or broad as it used to be'.

In terms of the Levitas framework, Jennifer took a redistributive perspective on the solution to social exclusion. Her suggestion was to 'put up the benefits, put up the minimum wage'. She opposed the idea of 'starting to encourage certain lifestyles' and commented that 'work can bring income but people don't always get to choose how much and what work they do and where it is'.

She thought that literacy provision made a contribution to addressing social exclusion but only 'in an individual and family way'. She mentioned a lot of 'stigma' and 'shame' associated with 'poor literacy skills' and creating barriers preventing people participating in the wider life of the community or accessing literacy provision.

She talked about the individuals she had worked with and reported that many of them had 'a lot of disappointment with schooling' and had experienced 'intolerance of employers' in respect of their 'literacy difficulties'. She described some research she had taken part in and spoke at length about the findings which appear to indicate that underlying physical conditions are often a factor in the learning difficulties some individuals have experienced. She said the initial results indicate that addressing underlying visual problems has impacted positively on some individuals' ability to read. She suggested that failure to identify certain physical conditions at an early stage in some people's lives may have contributed to their 'low literacy levels' and thus to their social exclusion.

She described many individuals who engaged with the service as 'people who want to get a job or change job'. She described the approach used in the provision as 'supported learning designed around the individual's self identified goals' and

explained that ‘we try to work out what stage they are at’ as a first step in working effectively with people. She also indicated that the approach involved encouraging people ‘to use their skills outside provision’. She described it as ‘difficult’ to measure the impact of literacy provision on social exclusion but stated that principally they used feedback from learners. This feedback was qualitative and related to everyday tasks such as shopping becoming easier and also to progression to other types of learning e.g. ‘going on to college’.

Sharon (Community Learning Worker – Family Learning and Regeneration)

Sharon has a first degree in English Literature and recently completed a post-graduate diploma in Community Education. She has also completed the Introductory Training in Adult Literacies (ITALL) and has approximately 2 years experience in adult literacy provision.

Sharon defined social exclusion as ‘any kind of barrier that was stopping individuals or a group of individuals from doing things that everybody else would have the opportunity to do’. When describing the causes of social exclusion she referred to there being a ‘multitude of reasons’ why people are socially excluded and explained that in the area where she worked ‘the geography and the problem of travel’ often ‘was excluding people from participating’. She also suggested that lack of confidence was something that has excluded many people saying ‘lack of confidence means that often they don’t want to go and try something new’. She explained however that poverty was the underlying reason which affected people’s ability to participate saying ‘poverty and money is an issue for many individuals’. Talking about the best way to address social exclusion in the context of literacy provision she advocated ‘removing barriers by addressing poverty’. She suggested several ways of doing this including subsidising or covering the cost of travel to learning venues and offering crèche provision or to cover the cost of childcare so that carers could participate in provision.

She asserted that ‘literacy helps not only to make people more confident learners but also to make them more confident individuals’. She said that provision ‘improved’ individuals ‘ability’ to ‘articulate needs’ and ‘achieve the fairest possible outcome for themselves’. She described ‘literacies’ as ‘the most basic element to life’ without which ‘it is almost impossible to go on and do other things whether it be looking for work or other social activities because everything seems to revolve around being able to read information, sign your name or go on the computer’. She explained provision boosted functional literacy skills and provided coping strategies saying ‘it lets people go out with a bank of resources and knowledge and makes them feel more confident and able’.

She attributed these impacts of literacy provision to ‘our approach’ and ‘the way tutors work’. She referred to the importance of relationship building between tutor and learner and the development of trust saying that often individuals needed the support of someone who ‘probably understood a bit better’. The approach used by practitioners she claimed ‘enabled people to confidently go out into the wider world and access information and resources’. She regarded the opportunities provision provided for peer support and sharing experiences as particularly important in developing individual confidence but she thought that these practices, and the benefits which ensued, were not unique to literacies provision. She developed this point by explaining that the impacts were ‘more apparent in literacy groups’ because of ‘obvious common bonds’ between learners due to the ‘quite personal’ nature and ‘emotions attached’ to literacy learning.

When asked how she knew if literacy provision made an impact in relation to social exclusion she cited several examples of working with individuals who had ‘very, very basic literacy skills’. These individuals whom she claimed were typical had apparently made only very ‘limited progress’ in terms of strategic outcomes relating to employment and education because of the ‘severity of their literacy difficulties’ but in terms of personal development progress was ‘really massive’. She therefore argued that there was ‘a disparity’ between formal indicators and ‘small things which make much more difference to people’s day to day life’.

She also talked about assessing the impact of literacy provision by ‘keeping your ears open and listening to the things that people are saying’. She was referring here to informal and passing comments that individuals had made about the impact of the provision on personal, work and family life suggesting that experience allows the practitioner to ‘pick up on the subtle things’ that more formal evaluation approaches overlook.

Area 1

Andrew (Service Manager for Sport and Active Recreation)

Andrew has a BA in Recreation Management and has worked for approximately five years managing local authority physical activity provision. When asked to define social exclusion, Andrew explained that in the context of physical activity 'the health equalities agenda seems to be the language of the moment' and made a link between social exclusion and 'reducing health inequalities'. He said that health inequalities were the 'result of social and economic factors that apply to specific geographic areas and sections of the population'. He linked this point to social exclusion by saying 'we are talking about people who are in some way disadvantaged' and identified 'disadvantage' as being manifest in 'either diet, access to transport, their educational attainment levels, their parenting skills or a range of different reasons'. He described these things as having 'accumulated' and having 'an impact on that person, that family or that group's health' resulting in certain types of lifestyle and making individuals 'more susceptible to illness and ailments', being 'more frequent users of the NHS' and enduring higher morbidity rates. He said that government interest in promoting health equality was in part 'driven by economics' and its agenda was 'to target more services at these groups...reduce expenditure in these areas...and get people to take more ownership of their own health and well-being'. He said he believed this agenda to be a 'positive move' because it 'empowered' individuals and 'enabled' them to have 'better life chances' and 'quality of life' and commented that it was encapsulated in *Lets Make Scotland More Active* (Scottish Executive 2003).

In the context of the Levitas Framework, he identified poverty as an underlying factor in social exclusion, saying that there must be a 'logic model' for addressing poverty and that employment he 'supposed' was an important element in that logic model. He described addressing employment and housing issues as 'crucial' and suggested that 'perhaps a change in attitude ...comes with the empowerment of having a job and earning a wage'. He reflected that the MUD discourse related to

‘personal values’ and choices a view which he illustrated by contrasting a decision to choose between ‘a six pack and twenty fags’ or ‘a gym membership’ as representing a different form of ‘escapism.’ He was also critical of the ‘evangelicalism’ of the public sector in promoting a particular behaviour ‘because it is good for you’.

He expressed the view that physical activity could contribute to ‘tackling’ social exclusion but that required a multi-discipline and ‘cross-cutting’ approach to provision and a requirement to address challenges of individual motivation. He described the complex nature of motivation as ‘a major barrier’ to more individuals becoming physically active. He made reference to Maslow’s (1943) theory of motivation which is based on a hierarchy of human need saying ‘You won’t think about physical activity until you have a roof over your head and attended to the basic needs’. He suggested that encouraging individuals to become more active had to be addressed ‘holistically’ and could not be dealt with in terms of a narrow physical activity provision. He asserted that ‘for someone who is challenged economically and educationally, being physically active is down the priority list’.

He described the need for a multi-agency and multi-discipline approach to physical activity and cited a number of infra-structure interventions including street lighting, sign posting, foot path maintenance and cycle path development which have the potential to encourage participation in physical activity. He referred to walking and cycling initiatives generated by this approach as ‘easy’ and ‘affordable’ for the individual and ‘can be done close to home’. He promoted the benefits of this approach saying ‘these things can improve health and well-being generally not just in terms of physical health but in terms of the health of our communities’. He expanded by saying ‘some of these things are very basic to community sustainability and feeling that you belong to a place where you enjoy living, you enjoy getting out and about and are part of the community where you live. This is much bigger than individual physical activity and health and well-being’.

However, he also suggested that the diverse nature of physically active, the ‘many different influencing factors’ which determined levels of physical activity and there

being no clear locus of responsibility for policy implementation meant that provision was incoherent as were messages to the public about how to achieve appropriate levels of health enhancing physical activity. He asserted that 'most people accept it's good to be active' but that in the general population there was a lack of or conflicting understandings of what constituted both physical activity and the levels required to maintain good health. He said that the conflation, by many local authorities of 'sport and physical activity in the same strategic approach', compounded the problem. He expressed the view that these things were 'certainly all linked together' adding that generally 'people don't participate in sport to be healthy. That is a by-product'. He suggested that people who want to be physically active 'do a range of things' but that mostly 'these things are quite different from sport'.

He described monitoring and evaluating the impact of physical activity as 'difficult' and 'the performance management culture' as 'extremely onerous'. He said it was 'self evident' that physical activity was beneficial and that sufficient guidance in monitoring and evaluating had not been forthcoming from central government. He argued that 'we can't afford not to do anything or else we will be where the United States is in terms of obesity levels'. He said that there is 'extremely compelling evidence' that physical activity is 'the best buy in health' however there tends to be a health policy focus on 'things that are easy to measure' and have immediate and easily recognisable short-term impacts. He referred to measures such as the level of smoking cessation in the population, which despite the expert view that 'physical inactivity is more of a risk for coronary heart disease (CHD) than smoking', attract greater political attention.

Responding to a question about the degree to which provision met local need, he pointed out that local physical activity provision failed in this because 'it has neither the resourcing or the profile to do this' nor is it 'as embedded in the cultural, particularly the NHS' as other initiatives such as dietary guidance or smoking cessation programmes.

David (Physical Activity Co-ordinator)

David has a Diploma in Personal Training with Referred Populations. He works part-time as a physical activity co-ordinator and also runs a personal training business. His work as a physical activity co-ordinator with the local authority provider is principally with young adults and school age children and is focussed in 'regeneration areas' which he explained have been identified as socially and economically disadvantaged according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

He said that 'social exclusion is harder to define than social inclusion'. He expanded on this assertion by saying 'with inclusion you have defined criteria, the people you are trying to include' however 'with exclusion, by its very nature are people you don't know about'. He agreed that social exclusion was caused by poverty but he suggested that it was also related to 'culture'. He proffered the example of migrant workers who are 'struggling with language' and 'socialising in their own groups' and who tend 'to lack the confidence to use services and facilities'. He speculated that perhaps there was an element of 'self exclusion' saying 'they must know about these things but for whatever reason they don't want to participate or maybe they are doing it on their own'.

He said that he tried to address social exclusion in his work by trying 'to engage with excluded groups in different ways' and supporting them 'to return to mainstream society'. He emphasised his role as 'being out there' and 'doing what he could' to encourage people 'to integrate with the community'.

In reference to the Levitas Framework he identified the MUD discourse as best characterising his analysis of social exclusion. He said 'I think attitudes are the key thing because if they don't have the attitude it doesn't matter what money or services you throw at them, they won't participate'. He went on to say that changing attitudes was central to the approach he used 'to break down the barriers to exercise'. He said 'throwing money at the problem can help' but he considered that 'to educate people' was a more effective approach saying 'I give them the knowledge so they can help

themselves'. He explained that one strategy he used was to encourage people to integrate physical activity into daily routines without incurring additional time or financial burdens. Another strategy he said was to 'identify participants who will have the confidence' and potential to be 'skilled up' to 'lead things themselves' in local communities adding 'physical activity provision is not just all about delivering exercise'. However he also defined physical activity as 'anything to do with movement' and talked mainly about encouraging people to take part in organised physical activity sessions.

Confidence was a recurring theme in David's narrative and central to how he believed physical activity provision contributed to addressing social exclusion. He talked about raising confidence levels in the individuals he worked with and how the programmes he ran had 'a positive impact' both physically and mentally for participants. He explained that when engaging with groups and individuals 'What I try to do is get their confidence levels up and get them to come along to a centre'. He suggested that a major barrier to participation is 'people think that is not for me. I am not supposed to go to a place like that'. He spoke about people lacking the 'self-confidence' to 'use the facility' despite knowing these were open to them. In particular he referred to perceptions about physical activity and that often people believe they are 'not fit enough to come'. He described physical activity provision as being about 'broadening their knowledge' saying 'I feel my role is...to educate people to be aware of the health benefits of just doing everyday activities to keep fit rather than to participate in sport'.

When asked how he knew if physical activity provision had made an impact he cited positive feedback from groups and individuals. He referred to there being an 'evaluation process' however his description suggested that it was orientated towards gathering quantitative data such as the number of individuals and groups that had engaged in provision, used facilities or had made contact in some way or other with the service. He was unsure if provision met local need saying that was 'a complex question'. He said that in the local area 'facilities wise we are well off but the problem is we don't have the right balance of usage'.

Chloe (Physical Activity Co-ordinator)

Chloe has a degree in Business Studies and a post-graduate diploma in Community Education which she gained as a mature student four years ago. Since then she has worked in her current role as part-time physical activity co-ordinator.

Chloe said that her work was located in or targeted at areas which were socially and economically deprived however she added that social exclusion could be experienced by 'people from different economic backgrounds and social strata'. She defined social exclusion as an individual 'lack of confidence' and 'lack of knowledge to engage with our services'. She did not identify an underlying cause of social exclusion saying it was 'different for each individual' but she suggested that 'for most people it is never lack of money'. She expressed the view that 'it is never just one reason. It is a whole range of things coming in to play'. She explained that in her work it took a long time to 'break down barriers' and 'get to the crux of the problem'. She stressed the importance in her job of 'developing trust' and the need to engage in 'long-term work in an area' in order to 'build relationships' and be effective.

She explained that a great deal of the physical activity provision was developed in response to 'things identified by Community Education'. She described the approach which she used as being about 'getting people to engage in things because I know it is good for them' and learning to 'do things for themselves'. She talked about sometimes 'just having to be prescriptive' but that most of the time her practice was to encourage people 'to work in dialogue'. When asked to provide some examples to illustrate what she did, she described supporting groups to 'set up classes' by 'giving them' her knowledge. She expanded by saying 'I like to think of myself as a conduit for information. I'm not just there to do physical activity it is about mental and physical well-being too also if I can sign-post things I do that as well'.

She said that physical activity provision could address social exclusion but it was its impact in terms of 'the confidence' it gives people and the 'feeling of great mental well-being' that was how it achieved this. She said that in her work she was 'looking for a confident person' who as a consequence 'can grasp physical activity'. She

elaborated by explaining that participation in physical activity involved a process of getting individuals ‘to understand’ before they can begin to ‘grasp the reasons’ and ‘engage’. She went on to say that without this process of ‘self-realisation’ they will ‘never engage in the process’. She also talked about the tendency of many individuals, referring particularly to women, to ‘de-prioritise’ physical activity, because of other ‘more pressing issues in their life’ such as finances, drug and alcohol issues and behavioural issues within the family.

When asked to describe how she evaluated the impact of physical activity provision she cited a range of quantitative measures that were used which mirrored those identified by David. She also made reference to ‘anecdotal’ evidence but said that she rarely had time to formally record this remarking that ‘it’s in my head, I know what is working with different people’. However she also noted that there was a ‘long lead in time’ before ‘the impact’ of provision could ‘be felt’. She expressed the view that ‘the ideology and policy’ of government ‘was shifting and becoming more coherent’ with the way she worked. She explained that what she meant by this was that there was growing awareness ‘of different forms of physical activity’ and of ‘how to engage people’. She concluded by remarking ‘things are slowly shifting, it is a mind-set’ but that central and local government ‘had to lead the way’.

Area 2

Sally (Project Manager – Healthy Lifestyles NHS/Local Authority Project)

Sally is a health professional with a nursing background. She manages a healthy lifestyle project which includes physical activity provision. She has been in her current role for approximately six years.

When asked to define social exclusion, Sally responded by saying 'well almost everyone would understand it as relating to poverty'. 'Lack of money' was a key theme which she illustrated by saying that 'better off people' are able to afford to go to the gym but people in 'deprived communities' were excluded from doing that 'because of their finances'. She identified symptoms of social exclusion as including 'unemployment', 'housing issues' and 'health issues'. She described the causes of social exclusion as 'being unemployed' and 'to do with educational background' but she went on to say that 'it goes beyond that. It is to do with culture'. She then suggested that misuse of drugs and alcohol was related to social exclusion adding that 'the social groups that we come across in the initiative smoke and drink'.

In reference to the Levitas Framework she said that she thought the project addressed all of the dimensions. She cited 'free provision' in her project as 'taking into account the poverty side of things'. However she focussed upon SID and MUD discourses citing various initiatives designed to get people into paid work and adding that 'probably more than anything' effort was required 'to change attitudes'. She spoke at length about the level of 'stress' people experienced which was related to state benefits. She said that the 'attitude' she encountered frequently amongst people engaged in the project was 'how do I stay on incapacity benefit'. She described people to whom 'it didn't occur' that 'maybe I should try and get off benefits'. The view she expressed was that 'being in work' meant that people had 'more opportunity to engage with other people' and consequently 'feel more included' and then she explained how her project helped to do this.

She said ‘we use a community development approach’ explaining that ‘initially we do some one to one support’ and ‘engage with people in different ways’. She listed points of contact in supermarkets, shopping centres and pubs. She then described getting ‘groups of people together’ and encouraging them ‘to identify their needs’. She said ‘we don’t tell them to stop smoking because it may take several years before people realise they have to do this’ adding that ‘often the first thing people will do is come along to a dance session, Salsa or Exercise to music’. She then explained how they ‘put people through these groups and then identify people who would like to do training’. She went on to describe how they recruited and trained volunteers to lead classes and groups by funding training programmes and accreditation and in that way ‘build capacity’. She said that in return for training, individuals initially give time voluntarily to the project but then have the opportunity to be employed on sessional contracts. She pointed out that some of these people ‘could probably get hours full-time but they don’t want that. They want to stay on benefits’ because ‘they don’t want to be restricted by full-time hours or lose the flexibility they have working as volunteers’. She added that there were people who gave ‘almost full-time hours’ to the project but that ‘it is their cultural attitude that they don’t want to work’. She qualified this statement by saying ‘most of the volunteers have mental health problems and that makes it difficult for them to hold down paid employment’. She said that many of their ‘problems’ related to ‘the quality of the work’ they had previously done and also often the ‘low pay nature’ of it. She summed up by saying ‘what our work is about’ is reducing ‘isolation’ and ‘to get in contact with these people and try to get them involved’.

She said that the project attempted to address ‘different forms of exclusion’ which related to ‘gender, race and ethnicity’. She said it was ‘probably most difficult to work with men’ and described a ‘weight management’ group for men which involved initiatives going into pubs and which focussed on diet and physical activity issues. She highlighted the initial reluctance of men to address health issues as relating to gender stereotypes and what was appropriate and inappropriate for men to do. She said ‘working with race’ is ‘also challenging’ and referred specifically to dress requirements which she identified as a barrier to females from some minority

ethnic and religious groups participating in physical activity. She also referred to the reluctance of some ethnic minority groups to engage in 'mainstream' provision or mix with other ethnic minority groups. When asked what she understood as social inclusion she said that in her project it was about making sure that 'people had equal opportunity to participate if that was what they chose to do'. She added 'we are needs led so we go along with what people say they want'.

When describing how she thought physical activity provision helped address social exclusion she talked about the benefits of 'a multi-discipline approach' and the ways in which physical activity provision contributed directly and indirectly to health. She said that workers on her team had backgrounds in either health or community work and that working together had been beneficial. She said that community workers had influenced the way those with a health background worked because 'we see things completely different now' and described how health workers had moved from a 'medical model' to a 'social model' of physical activity provision. She said consequently she has recognised the 'tunnelled vision' some NHS workers have about physical activity because they 'don't understand the wider determinants of health'.

She used an example of a 'pram pushing' group for 'isolated young mothers' to illustrate how physical activity provision addressed social exclusion. In the 'pram pushing' group, young mothers met once a week to walk together with their babies and have a cup of tea at the local community centre. She described the rationale behind it as being 'to improve physical activity', 'get the babies out as well' and to develop 'the social side of things'. She added that groups 'such as these' were sustained by 'training up participants to take on the running of activities' but 'we usually have staff in the background'. She suggested that 'if people start feeling better about themselves, begin socialising, feeling more confident', they were more likely to adopt healthy behaviours for example 'stop smoking' and in this way she linked physical activity, health and social exclusion.

When asked how she evaluated the impact of the provision she said ‘one thing we do know is that physical activity improves health so we don’t have to prove that’. She said that they use a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools and cited indicators which measure ‘social determinants’ and ‘physical’ determinants of health questions asked included ‘Is the individual engaging socially more often?’ or ‘Is the individual feeling less breathless?’. She said that they used a range of questionnaires but pointed out that ‘we have a lot of people with literacy difficulties so we can’t keep giving them forms’.

She explained that there were difficulties particularly with monitoring long-term impact. She said ‘we can only say that we get people involved but you don’t know the long-term health gain’ adding ‘I suppose a lot of what we are doing is about social interaction, getting people involved, the confidence building. That is our priority but the government want to see an improvement in health’.

Alistair (Sport Development Officer)

Alistair has a remit for policy development and face to face delivery of sport and physical activity provision. Alistair described himself as having ‘gradually worked my way up’ in sport and physical activity. He recently gained a MSc in Sport and Recreation Management.

When asked how he defined social exclusion Alistair said that ‘it really comes down to equal opportunities’. He went on to say that ‘everything we do is to be as inclusive as possible’. When asked to explain what he thought social exclusion meant and to identify the causes he said several things. He began by explaining that ‘history’, ‘finance,’ ‘confidence’ and ‘social class’ is ‘a large part of it’. He said that ‘we have four generations [in this area] who have never worked’ and that ‘people don’t mix because they see others as different’ and have ‘a fear of the unknown’. He characterised social exclusion in terms of people who ‘don’t have a lot of money’, ‘don’t travel to places’ and ‘have difficulty getting accommodation’. He attributed the cause of social exclusion to ‘laziness’. When questioned about what he meant he

explained that he was referring to the laziness of policy makers and practitioners. He talked about there being ‘complacency and acceptance’ that social exclusion ‘exists in society’, an idea he said that he ‘didn’t buy’. He said ‘there are always barriers to everything we do, certainly physical activity and sport, but there are ways around it’. He went on to say ‘I don’t think there is any excuse for exclusion...there are things you can do and a lot of it comes down to education’.

In reference to the Levitas Framework he said that ‘individuals who are categorised as socially excluded are not doing anything to help themselves but at the same time the structure of society doesn’t really allow them to do very much to help themselves’. He said that he hoped the approach used by his team took account of all these aspects and ‘was somewhere in the middle’.

When asked how he thought physical activity provision could address social exclusion he responded first by referring to ‘using sport as a tool’ and then discussed in more detail the approach he adopted. He said that his team used sport ‘to tackle different problems’ for example drug and alcohol issues, anti-social behaviour and vandalism. He said that one approach was to use sport as a diversionary activity and that it was frequently employed as a reactive measure. He said that sport used in this way contributed as an ‘early intervention tool’ and that there were associated ‘health, social and education benefits’. He described the ‘knock-on effect’ and ‘wider impact’ of provision saying ‘I like to think we put a positive approach back into the communities’.

He continued by describing in more detail the approach he used and how he understood physical activity addressed social exclusion. He began by saying ‘it’s all about engagement’ and stressing that ‘it’s the work on a one to one basis that is where the difference is made’. He talked about the impact of his work on people with disabilities and young people he described as ‘really on the down and out’. He described supporting individuals with disabilities who ‘had never been physically active’ to overcome the ‘real difficulties’ the ‘enjoyment’ and improvement in ‘attitude’ which results. He also described the impact of his team’s work on young

people ‘who are really on their third strike’ saying ‘they work with them, to educate them, to train them’. He explained the team ‘treat them as equals and educate them to say you are better than this’. He recounted instances of young people who have engaged in this way and gone on ‘to contribute hundreds of hours to our programmes as volunteers’, who have ‘gone on to college’ and as a result ‘become coaches’ and developed careers in sport and physical activity. He said the key to the team’s success in addressing social exclusion was their ‘open door approach’, ‘working in partnership’ with police, social services and other agencies. He said ‘it’s about face to face stuff’, ‘engaging with people’ but ultimately it was about ‘personalities and skills’ in the team. He explained ‘we have people willing to invest time’ and ‘take individuals in, mentor them, train them up’. He said a lot of their work was about addressing confidence, ‘people will have opinions about things but they never put them forward because they have never been told they are valuable’. He elaborated by asserting ‘building confidence takes time, knowledge and ability. There needs to be a relationship there in the first place’. He added ‘it does annoy me when people say you should be more confident well individuals need to have something to be confident about’. He linked this point to his approach of locating officers in communities because he argued that it was not sufficient to target individuals in isolation. He said developing confidence required interventions across communities saying ‘you can’t just work with one person you have to work collectively’ adding ‘lack of confidence breeds lack of confidence’ and you need to ‘overcome resistance’, due to ‘fear’, people protecting their ‘status’ and attitudes such as ‘not cool’. He summed up by saying ‘we have a coaching mentality rather than a teaching mentality’.

In response to my question about the impact of the Single Outcome Agreement on local provision he said that the ‘outcome driven’ policy of the Single Outcome Agreement was a top down approach which took insufficient account of local need. He thought this was detrimental to local physical activity provision because local needs were not adequately recognised or consulted on and the nature of provision was being determined at the centre. Referring to the government and local health equality policy he said ‘unfortunately there is still a big gap between the health

agenda and what we do'. He said that in relation to NHS lead health interventions 'physical activity still tends to be a peripheral thing'. He said that despite enthusiasm in the physical activity sector few health professionals have engaged with the idea of developing a 'strategic and preventative approach' to health using physical activity. He described the current approach to be reactive characterising it as 'so we have a problem how do we tackle it' saying that physical activity provision was not an integrated and strategic part of most health provision.

He said that the impact of provision was measured using quantitative and qualitative data. He commented that being too 'quantitatively focussed can have a negative effect' on provision because it insufficiently portrays the depth of impact provision can have on individuals. He said however that 'numbers were important' but that 'case studies' offered greater 'insight' into the work of the team. He said that provision to promote social inclusion 'is only really working if it has long term impact' however that was difficult to measure.

Area 3

Maureen (Health and Fitness Manager)

Maureen said she had been working in local government for over twenty years in sport and physical activity related roles and explained her remit was to manage and promote physical activity and health related provision in the leisure centres in her area.

When I asked Maureen how she defined social exclusion she responded by saying 'we have to include everybody' and throughout the interview she talked about social exclusion in terms of non-participation in physical activity provision. She explained that her service often worked in partnership with the NHS and that funding and thus provision was 'fortunately or unfortunately' determined by preset measures of deprivation set out by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). She suggested that her service tried to 'look at people where there is maybe poverty' and identified the reason as to why they might not be using local physical activity

‘facilities’ as ‘lack of money’ and ‘lack of education’. She referred to provision being ‘open to everybody’ and to subsidised pricing strategies to make provision accessible irrespective of income.

I asked her what she thought the underlying causes of social exclusion were and she said ‘could be money, could be people can’t afford it and it is the last thing on their list’. She also identified a ‘circle’ of health issues as often being factors in social exclusion which were ‘depression, over-eating, diabetes and cardiac problems’. She added that she thought ‘a lot to it could be education’ saying ‘it is a simple message, exercise is good for you, exercise can benefit you. It is to do with educating people’. She explained that there were several reasons why people may not have used local facilities. She referred to ‘fear and ignorance’ as a barrier to participation. Some people she said think ‘I am not fit enough to come along to leisure centres’ or ‘fear’ because ‘they are very overweight’ that they are going to be ‘looked at’. They are also often deterred from participating because of a mental picture they hold of sport centre users as ‘people in lycra who are slim’. Others, she said, believed that ‘it’s ok I’m fairly healthy’ but she commented that in adopting this attitude ‘they are missing the bigger picture’. She also said that past experiences deter people from participating in physical activity citing ‘the stigma of school PE’ and the negative impact it has on many young woman and their capacity to ‘know the fun’ of exercise. She said ‘my aim is to make it fun and achievable’ and that ‘a bit of education’ was ‘needed’. She acknowledged that the barriers which deterred people from participating were significant saying ‘the biggest hurdle is getting people through the door’. She added that there were misunderstanding amongst both younger and older people about ‘who the centre’ catered for. She suggested that overcoming barriers required provision to be pitched at a ‘low’ and ‘achievable level’ and that ‘you have got to pitch it fun’. Maureen stressed the importance of relationships and relationship building in ‘encouraging or persuading’ people to participate.

She developed these themes in a discussion about the Levitas Framework, first identifying MUD as most closely characterising the discourse of local interventions designed to address social exclusion. She then referred to social exclusion as an

experience or condition typically affecting ‘people who had come out of school’ without ‘a good education’ or people who are ‘single parents’. She described as effective, local employability projects which offered education and training opportunities to young people which ‘gave people confidence’ and future job prospects. She suggested that with appropriate support people can overcome ‘the fear of new learning’ and commented that the local council ‘is understanding the needs of individuals, the barriers they face and supporting them to get into work’.

She said that physical activity provision could help address social exclusion and that since 2007 there was ‘raised awareness’ about social exclusion and the role of physical activity provision in addressing it. She said that the Single Outcome Agreement had ‘clarified’ her work in relation to social exclusion and ‘given clearer pathways for implementing it’. She mentioned some initiatives she had been involved in which ‘targeted’ different groups in the population. She described working in partnership with police, fire service and youth services to develop a project around sport and physical activity which ‘keep youths of the street’ and contribute to a reduction in drug and alcohol misuse. She described collaborating with local care homes to develop physical activity provision for older adults which emphasised the ‘social’ as well as the ‘health benefits’ of physical activity. She described pricing policies designed to counter the effect of low income on individuals ability to engage in provision and use facilities at the leisure centres saying ‘we try to make it cheaper for people who can’t afford it by bringing in membership’. She also mentioned working with families. She also described at times ‘disguising motives’ in the strategies she used to encourage people to enter the sport facilities and to initially engage with coaches and instructors.

Asked if provision met local need and how did she know she responded by saying ‘we are ahead of the game’ and ‘we are doing massive amounts to raise awareness’. She said that she ‘monitored’ attendance figures and queried significant changes in patterns of participation. She explained that individuals engaging in physical activity provision through health sector referral schemes were ‘closely monitored and tracked’ but it was hard to evaluate longer term impact because once they had moved

out of this type of provision it was difficult to track what they were doing. Membership schemes assisted in tracking levels of activity but the information only reflected use of the facilities. She also said that feedback from police and fire fighters about reduced number of incidents involving anti-social behaviour and young people was also indicative of the positive impact of physical activity provision.

Caroline (Leisure Centre Manager)

Caroline explained that she had started working as leisure attendant with 'no qualifications' in 2002 and went on to gain a range of qualifications as a physical activity practitioner mainly in relation to delivering physical activity exercise referral programmes and body building. In 2004 she became a manger of another sports centre in the area before moving to her current position. Caroline explained that she delivered a range of exercise programmes in addition to her management remit in the centre.

When asked to define her understanding of social exclusion, Caroline responded by saying 'I think pricing can have a big impact on people from different social backgrounds'. She went on to say that 'poverty' was 'quite prevalent' in the locality, that there was 'high unemployment' and that the local economy was 'depressed'. She added that 'the main barrier to participation is cost'. She also said the 'rural nature' of the area caused 'difficulties in relation to transport'. When asked what she understood the causes of social exclusion to be, she referred to 'financial barriers' and 'family commitments' that were preventing people from participating in physical activity. She explained that 'there are a lot of single-parent families in the area' and although there was a crèche 'available', it 'costs users'. She added that the crèche was 'much busier than it used to be' but that it and other facilities 'tend to be used by wealthier people from outside the immediate area'.

In relation to the Levitas Framework she identified RED as the discourse which most accurately reflected the local approach to social exclusion. She said that 'through pricing policy we try to address poverty'. However she identified a weakness in their

approach saying ‘but the pricing policy doesn’t recognise single-parents in its structure’.

She said that physical activity provision could address social exclusion but ‘it is a hard process’. She then identified several barriers which prevented people being ‘socially included’ which were economic, perceptual and lack of interest and talked about how she perceived her role as a physical activity practitioner in relation to social exclusion could address these.

She repeated the point that many people often ‘can’t afford’ to access provision and she also added that even when people had overcome initial barriers to engaging in physical activity that ‘retention was not huge’ in any of the types of provision. She said ‘initially they seem keen’ but often attendance ‘dropped off’ and attributed this to ‘lack of interest’. However she said she didn’t think these people were ‘excluded’ because ‘they have made a choice not to participate’. She also identified attitudes about sport facilities as a barrier which deterred people from participating saying ‘they see the sport centre as a place for fit people and have the stereo-typical image of the lycra and it just puts them off’.

She referred to previous negative experiences of physical activity as a barrier to adult participation saying that reluctance to exercise may ‘stem back to having bad memories of physical education in school’. She referred to perceptions of physical activity linked to an ‘army style military regime’ and her role in ‘trying to break that down’. She described this role as being ‘to put’ individuals ‘at ease’ and ‘find out what is going to motivate them’. She talked about the importance of building a ‘rapport’ and ‘to listen’ to ‘fears and concerns and issues’ individuals ‘might have’. She summed up by saying she thought it was about ‘just winning that person’s confidence’ and added that ‘the biggest step is just getting them in the door’.

Weight and weight reduction seemed to be a priority for Caroline and throughout the interview she referred frequently to the issue of weight and obesity and she described the impact of what she did in relation to this issue. She described the impact of

physical activity as evident in ‘small changes’ such as greater ease in an ‘overweight’ individual’s ability ‘to get up stairs or tie their own shoe laces’. She suggested that these ‘little changes’ are ‘a positive effect’ which have a significant impact on individuals’ ability to participate in ‘normal’ day to day activity. She also described a ‘grandmother’ who was ‘depressed about her image’. Caroline said that as a result of participating in physical activity provision ‘she did lose a lot of weight’ and commented ‘she looks fantastic now’.

When asked how she monitored and evaluated the impact of physical activity provision she referred to the use of pre and post- programme questionnaires which were distributed to individuals referred via the NHS to physical activity sessions at the centre and described how these were used to identify individual goals and track achievement of these. She said that provision was good at addressing ‘expressed need’ but that as an organisation they needed ‘to improve’ on ‘external research’ which she explained as ‘identify who we are not reaching’.

Chapter 4

Findings – Policy Analysis

Introduction

The overall aim of this research is to explore policy and practitioner discourses of social exclusion in adult literacy and physical activity provision.

The specific questions this research aims to address are:

- How is social exclusion conceptualised and represented in policy texts?
- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

The findings are organised in two chapters. This chapter addresses the first of my research questions and is a presentation and discussion about the findings from an analysis of policy texts. The policy texts relate to social exclusion in Scotland and to adult literacy and physical activity provision. In the following chapter I address the remaining two questions and present the findings from data gathered from interviews with literacy and physical activity practitioners in three local authority areas in Scotland.

How is Social Exclusion Conceptualised and Represented in Policy Texts?

Introduction

In the literature review I drew on examples from Scottish and UK social exclusion policy texts to illustrate the relationship between economic development and social exclusion. In this discussion I focus upon some of these policy documents and those in particular which relate specifically to adult literacy and adult physical activity provision in Scotland. I identify discursive themes which link adult literacy and adult

physical activity to the discourses of social exclusion articulated in key social exclusion policy texts.

The main social exclusion policy texts which have been included in this analysis are *Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a); *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (Scottish Executive, 2002) and *Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2008a). In this discussion I also refer to The *Concordat* (Scottish Government, 2007c) between Scottish Government and Scottish local authorities as it provides the framework for the relationship between central and local government from 2007 about how policy priorities are identified and delivered at local level.

The key adult literacy policy texts referred to here are *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS)* (Scottish Executive, 2001); *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2007a) and *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance* (Scottish Government, 2010c). The key adult physical activity policy texts referred to here are *Lets Make Scotland More Active: A Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2003) and *Five-Year Review of 'Let's Make Scotland More Active' – A Strategy for Physical Activity* (NHS Scotland, 2009a).

In my analysis of social exclusion policy texts three aspects of the discursive practices were noticeable. Firstly the tone of social exclusion discourse changed in the period between 1999 and 2007. An initial combative tone evident in *Social Inclusion - Opening the Door to a Better Scotland: Strategy* (The Scottish Office, 1999) and *Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999) changed to one of enablement and collaboration in *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (Scottish Executive, 2002) and *Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2008a). Secondly, during the same period an economic discourse with individualistic overtones gained prominence in the policy texts. This discourse identified economic development which is driven by individual endeavour as fundamental to social inclusion. Other discourses were evident but were represented in a way that suggests

they had become more peripheral policy considerations. Thirdly policy was framed around promoting social inclusion as opposed to addressing social exclusion. Consequently the term social exclusion appears only rarely in the policy texts. In this chapter I address these discourses, then discuss how these themes are reflected in the key adult literacy and physical activity policy texts and finally show the similarities and differences between them. I begin by illustrating how the tone of social exclusion policy texts move from a combative to a more enabling discourse by highlighting the conceptual metaphors used to discuss social exclusion, the emphasis on an individualistic economic discourse and the preference for the language of social inclusion.

Social Exclusion - Combative to Enabling Discourses

Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters (Scottish Executive, 1999a) is a policy text with a focus on poverty. It was published shortly after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and under the auspices of a New Labour administration which had recently returned to government after eighteen years of Conservative Governments. Poverty and social exclusion are represented in *Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters* as a consequence of the previous governments' exploitive and detrimental policies and practices. These extracts illustrate how the New Labour Government distances itself from culpability in having created the problems it faces but nevertheless takes on responsibility for addressing them.

> We cannot right the wrongs of the past overnight. We know many of Scotland's injustices are complex and deep-rooted (Scottish Executive, 1999a:Foreword n.p).

> To fully understand the severity of the problem we are facing we need to understand what has happened over the last twenty years when the 80's and early 90's saw a significant increase in the numbers of people living in poverty (Scottish Executive, 1999a:4).

References to the 80s and 90s attribute current poverty and disadvantage directly to the actions of the previous UK Conservative Governments. The underlying discourse

is that poverty and disadvantage has its roots in social and institutional structures and that social exclusion is the consequence.

In the introduction to *Social Justice: a Scotland where everyone matters* reference is made to early 20th century social reformers by Wendy Alexander MSP, Minister for Communities. By citing in her introduction individuals including Robert Owen, William Beveridge and Aneurin Bevin, the Communities Minister is representing the new political regime as being progressive and socially just. In representing the Scottish Labour administration as a socially responsible and reformist force a distinction is being made between it and the previous regime. The text is combative in tone, something which is made apparent through the frequent use of militaristic vocabulary and expressions. The following extracts illustrate

> What is really new about this report is that for the first time we address both people and places in the **fight against poverty**
> (Scottish Executive, 1999a:3).
>
> ...**stamping out** injustice and **defeating** child poverty...
> (Scottish Executive, 1999a:4).
>
> ...poverty is something that we can only **defeat** together...
> (Scottish Executive, 1999a:4).
>
> ...make **change happen on the ground**...
> (Scottish Executive, 1999a:5).
>
> ...their **contribution to the fight**
> (Scottish Executive, 1999a:5).
>
> ...our **targets are focused on** people and changing their lives (Scottish Executive, 1999a:9).
>
> By **combating** family poverty, we will make sure...
> (Scottish Executive, 1999a:9).

Social exclusion is represented as an external threat and this is consistent with the militaristic tone of the discourse. The following excerpt illustrates this.

> We want to focus support on the most vulnerable young people who are in **greatest danger** of becoming permanently excluded (Scottish Executive, 1999a:11).

However by 2002 the tone of policy has become less combative. Social exclusion is no longer represented as the consequence of external and malevolent forces but increasingly as something which is perhaps more complex and embedded in society. *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (Scottish Executive, 2002) is characterised by language which suggests an acknowledgement that social exclusion is a more complex phenomenon than previously represented. Providing, enhancing, supporting, improving, optimising are words used frequently in the text and are in contrast to the militaristic language of *Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a). These words convey a sense that a more pragmatic and cooperative approach to social exclusion is being contemplated and perhaps, an acknowledgement that the radical action which the militaristic tone of the earlier text implied is too simplistic and possibly not even desirable. The following excerpt illustrates these points and shows how social exclusion has been repositioned from an external threat to internal problem.

> We have committed ourselves to **dismantling the obstacles** that people face in their lives and by doing so, we will **unlock the prosperity** that is at the heart of our vision for Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2002:5).

'Dismantling' and 'unlock' suggest a process and level of complexity which 'stamping out', 'fight' and 'combating' do not. Implicit in the notion of dismantling the obstacles and unlocking prosperity is also the idea that social exclusion and poverty are not the consequence of external forces but are generated by internal social and economic practices. Recognising social exclusion as something undesirable but inherent in social institutions requires a different sort of approach to achieve change because of the vested interest this analysis implies. 'Working in partnership' (Scottish Executive, 2002:19) and similar terms suggest this has been acknowledged. However vestiges of militaristic language still remain in the text and are illustrated by the use of expressions such as

> ...significant **action on a number of fronts** (Scottish Executive, 2002:5).

> ...the opportunity now to **sharpen the attack** on poverty, inequality and discrimination
> (Scottish Executive, 2002:6).

> ...**armed** with their experience
> (Scottish Executive, 2002:6).

Closing the Opportunity Gap emphasises the way the Scottish Executive plans to support the development of prosperity. Expressions such as '**we will give** our young people the best possible start in life', '**we will make** our nation healthier', '**we want** our young people to realise their full potential' and '**we will tackle** poverty and disadvantage' emphasise the policy maker's role. The focus therefore seems still to be predominately on interventions to reduce structural barriers to social inclusion as this excerpt illustrates.

> Success depends upon many factors. But critical among these is the extent to which people and communities across Scotland can be freed from the barriers which limit their capabilities and capacity (Scottish Executive, 2002:5).

However by 2008 when the Scottish National Party government published *Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2008a) the emphasis had shifted. Social exclusion continues to be recognised as a phenomenon or process embedded in social institutions and structures but at the same time the role of the individual as an agent of prosperity as opposed to the state is becoming more prominent. This idea is conveyed in the way that disease and waste seem to be replacing combat as a metaphor of social exclusion.

> Poverty has **blighted** Scotland for generations
> (Scottish Government, 2008a:6).

> The time has come for sustained action to address this huge **waste of potential** in our people and society
> (Scottish Government, 2008a:6).

> This Government ... is determined to address the **root causes** of poverty...
> (Scottish Government, 2008a:6).

'Blight' and expressions such as 'waste of potential' and 'root causes' imply that social exclusion is something which emanates from the individual but is treatable. This is reinforced by two, apparently contradictory, discourses the first of which emphasises community, solidarity and collective action and the second a solution focussed upon individual endeavour. It is claimed that *Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland*

> provides a focus for our public, private and third sectors to **work together in a concerted effort to deliver greater Solidarity** for all. By **leading this broad coalition for change**, Government will **champion community empowerment** and deliver large increases in funding and support for the Third Sector in Scotland
> (Scottish Government, 2008a:6).

and that what is required to achieve this is

> **the collective will of the people of Scotland**
> (Scottish Government, 2008a:6).

The expressions 'coalition for change', 'work together in a concerted effort', 'deliver greater solidarity', 'the collective will of the people' and 'champion community empowerment' imply a communitarian approach which is not sustained in the individualist perspective portrayed in the following excerpt

> We are committed to an approach which supports empowering people to make a difference to their own lives. We must adopt an approach that improves the capacity of individuals and their families to lift themselves out of poverty by **developing their resilience**
> (Scottish Government, 2008a:9).

In the above extract the role of the individual in dealing with poverty and disadvantage is emphasised. The focus is not upon eliminating poverty but instead on ensuring that individuals are better equipped to deal with it. This suggests an approach more akin to a neo-liberal individualistic ideology than the communitarian approach the previous excerpt suggests. The government is articulating its role as an enabler, however, the responsibility to address poverty is clearly seen as lying with individuals and families. Terms such as community, solidarity and collective action

are used rhetorically to rally readers to a common cause which is to engage enthusiastically with a neo-liberal individualistic economic agenda. These terms are not, it seems, intended to be understood in the more traditional sense to mean collectivism, shared goals and equitably enjoyed benefits. Instead they are being used to suggest the need for the widespread adoption of a single approach when addressing poverty and social exclusion. The ideas of 'supporting people to make a difference to their own lives', 'improving the capacity of individuals' and that families can 'lift themselves out of poverty', suggest individualistic solutions rather than ones that deal with systemic injustice.

These strategies to address social exclusion which are focussed on the individual seem principally to be about enabling people to engage in paid employment. In each of the policy texts (Scottish Executive, 1999a; Scottish Executive, 2002; Scottish Government, 2008a) paid employment is identified as the solution to poverty and disadvantage. *Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a) described 'the main driver of poverty as worklessness' and identified 'getting people back to work' as a means to 'deliver social justice'. In *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (Scottish Executive, 2002) it was asserted that 'Employment, or the lack of it, lies at the heart of many of the opportunity gaps which people face' and in *Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2008a) 'well paid and sustained employment' was evidenced as being 'by far the most frequent route out of poverty for working age adults'.

The increased capacity of individuals to engage in paid employment and thus to economic development and a more inclusive society are also themes which are evident in *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2001) (ALNIS) and *Let's Make Scotland More Active* (Scottish Executive, 2003) (LMSMA) and become more prominent in subsequent adult literacy and physical activity policy texts.

In the following sections I illustrate the discourses of social exclusion in adult literacy and the discourses of social exclusion in adult physical activity policy. I begin by describing the discourses of social exclusion in adult literacy policy between 2001 and 2011. This is followed by a similar analysis of the discourses of social exclusion in adult physical activity policy during the same period. A discussion follows which explores the similarities and differences in the discourses of these two policy areas.

Discourses in Adult Literacy Policy

I have identified two key policy texts which are specifically concerned with adult literacy policy and provision in Scotland. These are *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2001) and *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance* (Scottish Government, 2010c) and I focus upon these in this analysis. There are other policy texts for which adult literacy and numeracy policy is an important concern and these include *Life through Learning; Learning through Life. The Life Long Learning Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2003a) *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2007a) and *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth* (Scottish Government, 2010b). In my discussion I also make reference to these texts since they provide evidence of the presence of different discourses in Scottish Adult literacy policy and the way policy has evolved.

My analysis of these texts suggests that the discourse of literacy and social exclusion changed between 2001 and 2011. The change was significant but it happened gradually. The discourse shifted from a perspective grounded in 'overcoming the legacy of neglect' (Scottish Executive, 2001:18) evident in *Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a) to a discourse of collectively unleashing economic potential. In the former policy economic development was acknowledged as an important driver for learning but not exclusively. In the latter economic development was overtly articulated as the key driver for learning and the route to social justice.

In 2001 the Scottish Executive published an *Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* (ALNIS) in which it was unequivocal in its view that 'An inclusive society is also a literate society.'(Scottish Executive, 2001:7) and that 'The strategy (for adult literacy and numeracy) must support the Scottish Executive's vision of a *Smart, Successful, Scotland* and an inclusive and socially just society' (Scottish Executive, 2001:13). ALNIS was a policy response to *The International Adult Literacy Survey'* (IALS) which concluded that 23% of Scots may have low skills and further 30% may have inadequate skills to meet the demands of modern life.

In ALNIS institutional and structural barriers were identified as the main cause of low literacy and numeracy levels. In highlighting

> **the inability of the system to provide the capacity** for a substantial increase in the number of learners (Scottish Executive, 2001:12).

The Scottish Executive was perhaps suggesting, as I have illustrated previously, that the policies of the previous government were to blame. This lies behind the statement that

> **Action is needed to improve the nature, extent, quality and range of services offered to** literacy and numeracy learners (Scottish Executive, 2001:12)

and suggests the Scottish Executive has assumed responsibility for addressing 'low levels' of literacy and numeracy in Scotland.

ALNIS professed 'a national commitment to lifelong learning' and has a central preoccupation with how 'the necessary services and opportunities were to be provided' (Scottish Executive, 2001:13). Use of words such as '**nurturing**' (Scottish Executive, 2001:13) and expressions such as '**give** people the chance' and '**provide** an interesting purpose for using reading, writing or numeracy' (Scottish Executive, 2001:38) imply the Scottish Executive had identified its own role as provider and enabler. Poverty and various forms of disadvantage were explicitly linked to 'low levels' of literacy and numeracy amongst the population (Scottish Executive, 2001:9-10). Raising literacy and numeracy levels amongst the most disadvantaged is

therefore seen as contributing to a social inclusion agenda. It is suggested this can be done by 'promoting understanding' and providing access to 'a whole range of life opportunities'. Indeed ALNIS explicitly linked social inclusion and literacy when it was stated that 'An inclusive society is also a literate society' (Scottish Executive, 2001:7). The relationship between literacy and social inclusion is encompassed in a more multi-faceted discourse than in later strategic texts where the focus is on the contribution improved literacy and numeracy skills or capabilities make to individual and national prosperity.

In ALNIS 'improving literacy and numeracy' was deemed 'crucial' to enabling 'fulfilling' and socially integrated lives (Scottish Executive, 2001:7). It was also credited with helping to 'promote a wide range of Government policies and priorities such as social justice, health, lifelong learning and economic development'. The role of literacy and numeracy 'in an increasingly globalised economy' was stressed and emphasised in the statement

> Scotland's future prosperity and competitiveness depends on building up the skills of her existing workforce and improving the employability of those seeking work
> (Scottish Executive, 2001:7)

However consider the emphatic assertion

> **But** improving literacy skills can also provide the first steps to learning other languages, promoting understanding in a multi-cultural society, and accessing a whole range of life opportunities.
> (Scottish Executive, 2001:7)

The implication of this discourse is that despite the imperative of the economic agenda, the Scottish Executive remained attached to the idea of literacy and numeracy as retaining intrinsic value. However this discourse was much weaker in subsequent policy texts.

Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy is unequivocal in the view that the achievement of social inclusion and justice goals are intrinsically linked to economic

development. Fundamental to this is ensuring that 'people are equipped with the skills, expertise and knowledge for success' (Scottish Government, 2007a:2). According to the Scottish Government what is required is a 'cohesive lifelong learning system centred upon the individual but responsive to employer needs'. The refreshed skills strategy *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth* claims to place an even greater emphasis upon 'the skills needed to accelerate recovery and to deliver sustainable economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2010a:5) reflecting the conditions post the 2008 banking debt crisis and economic recession. The titles of both these policy texts, in particular the use of the term 'skills', is perhaps indicative of a much less tentative policy discourse about the purpose of learning than in ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001) or *The Lifelong Learning Strategy* (Scottish Executive, 2003a). Indeed in 2007 *The Lifelong* ***Learning*** *Strategy* is replaced by *A Lifelong* ***Skills*** *Strategy.*

Learning is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English (Pearsall and Hanks, 2005:996) as 'the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience or being taught'. Skill is defined as 'the ability to do something well' (Pearsall and Hanks, 2005:1658). There are significant differences in the meanings of these words. Learning, in being defined as 'the acquisition of knowledge or skills', is suggestive of a multifaceted concept, which involves both understanding and know how. Skill on the other hand represents just one facet of learning suggesting it has a much narrower meaning. *A Lifelong Skills Strategy* therefore implies a narrower focus is being taken than in its predecessor policy text, *The Lifelong Learning Strategy*. This narrower focus involves prioritising economic policy imperatives over individual learning needs and ambitions. In doing so it raises questions about the continuing learner centredness of adult literacy and numeracy provision which was endorsed in ALNIS.

ALIS (Scottish Government, 2010c) opens with an endorsement of *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth* (Scottish Government, 2010a) by reaffirming that:

> improving levels of adult literacy and numeracy is crucial to securing a competitive economy, promoting education and lifelong learning, and tackling ill-health and improving well-being (Scottish Government, 2010c:27).

This affirmation incontrovertibly links the Scottish Government policy perspective on adult literacy and numeracy provision to an agenda for social inclusion and justice. It does this by making a connection to economic development and is a discourse which is in contrast with the more tentative approach in ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001). There are several other differences in the tone and content of the discourses in ALNIS and ALIS (Scottish Government, 2010c). Some of these differences reflect the different economic climate in which these texts were produced and different fiscal and governance arrangements between local authorities and central government in Scotland. Some of the differences also reflect the impact of almost ten years of increased resourcing of adult literacy provision in Scotland and the impact on the professional discourse.

ALNIS identified a need in the adult population for literacy and numeracy provision and also recommended specific actions to address the need. Significant funding ensured most of these recommendations were implemented. The highly prescriptive approach in ALNIS is in contrast to the subsequent 'strategic guidance' of ALIS (Scottish Government, 2010c:13) in which the Scottish Government states clearly that 'It is not the job of government to prescribe how policy strategic guidance of this nature is implemented at local level'. Instead it 'strongly encourages' and 'promotes' certain approaches while refraining from making specific recommendations. This approach can in part be attributed to the change in relationship between local and national government after the introduction of the Concordat in 2007 (Scottish Government, 2007c). The effect of this was to introduce Single Outcome Agreements according to which local authorities identified and set local priorities and determined how these priorities should be addressed within a framework of national outcomes identified by central government. This less directive approach is probably consequential on the absence of significant central government investment and funding in adult literacy and numeracy provision.

The way in which ALNIS and ALIS engage with pedagogical matters also highlights differences and similarities between these policy texts. There is continuity in the way that both endorse a 'learner centred' approach in adult literacy and numeracy provision and also in the contradictory discourses about learners that both texts contain. There are differences between the language and terminology used in each of the texts. In particular in ALIS frequent reference is made to both 'literacies' and 'capabilities', terms which are not used in ALNIS.

ALNIS specifies a pedagogical approach for the delivery of adult literacy and numeracy provision using what is described as 'a lifelong learning approach' (Scottish Executive, 2001:14). This is described as being built around learners' personal goals and individual contexts and as having a concern to achieve:

> collaboration and synergy of effort across sectors and policy areas so that all adults with learning needs are systematically matched with the resources available
> (Scottish Executive, 2001:14).

ALIS 2020 similarly endorses a 'learner-centred approach and personal curriculum' promoting a 'social practice' approach as the being the most successful way to teach adult literacies (Scottish Government, 2010c:7). The social practice approach is described as 'contextualising learning to make it more relevant' and also about 'developing capabilities in making decisions, solving problems and expressing ideas and critical opinions about the world' (ibid). In ALNIS it is argued that a 'deficit approach' 'is at odds with perceptions of the great majority of those with low skills who are satisfied that their skills are adequate' and that

> More fundamentally, a deficit approach is limited by its reliance on improving only the skills specified in the minimum standard.
> (Scottish Executive, 2001:14).

A 'lifelong learning approach' over a deficit approach is promoted on two grounds. The first is that most individuals would not identify themselves as having insufficiently developed skills and the second is that by applying a deficit analysis

what ought to be learned is too narrowly defined. On the contrary it is argued that a 'lifelong learning approach' is flexible and responsive to the needs of a constantly evolving social and economic environment and acknowledges and takes account of individual learning needs and circumstances. Importantly a 'lifelong learning approach' is represented as capitalising on individual potential and strengths. This approach is probably most clearly articulated in the *Life through Learning; Learning through Life. The Life Long Learning Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2003a) document in which the Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning identified learning as 'gaining new skills and new knowledge' and as a 'lifetime opportunity and a lifetime achievement'. He expresses a wish that people are 'eager to learn more about what they already know', 'be curious to learn what they might have only heard about' 'be inspired to achieve what they thought would never be possible' and 'retain that passion for acquiring new skills and 'new scholarship throughout their lives' (Scottish Executive, 2003a:6). In this lifelong learning approach the learner is conceptualised as having achieved but with the potential to achieve more or different forms of learning.

In ALIS, however, there is a confident statement made without any accompanying justification or much explanation that 'adult literacies work is aligned with the social practice principles that underpin community learning and development (CLD)' (Scottish Government, 2010c:5). The implication being that the success of the approach used since 2001 speaks for itself.

There are also contrary discourses in ALNIS. In drawing attention to a perceived need for adult literacy and numeracy provision reference is made to 'adults with low literacy and numeracy levels'. These adults tend to be characterised as vulnerable and marginalised people. Several references throughout the text are made to individuals who have 'poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills' (Scottish Executive, 2001:18) and 'poor readers' and to 'low', 'poor' or 'inadequate skills levels' (Scottish Executive, 2001:42). These references also indicate that in describing literacy and numeracy levels as low or poor, individual performance in

literacy and numeracy is being assessed against a ‘minimum standard’. If this is not the case then how can it be determined what is ‘low’, ‘poor’ or ‘inadequate’?

Additionally there are implied moral and normative assumptions about lifestyle and behaviour peppering the text. For example quotations from learners have been used to illustrate the benefits of adult literacy provision. These have the effect of portraying individuals with a ‘low level’ of literacy and numeracy as vulnerable and inadequate. It also suggests perhaps that their lifestyle or behaviour in being inappropriate or not conforming to social norms is a contributory factor. Sharon (Scottish Executive, 2001:9) is quoted as saying ‘I left school at 16 when I became pregnant’. Sharon, Stella and Ian (Scottish Executive, 2001: 9 -10) talk about how learning has helped them become more confident. Equally case studies make reference to the effect of learning on individuals’ confidence and ‘ability to cope’ (Scottish Executive, 2001: 31-32).

Although discourses of ‘deficit’ are evident in ALIS 2020, they are more tentative. For example in ALIS 2020 reference is made to ‘poor health literacy’. However it is the ‘complexity of health environments’ which are identified as the primary problem and not the individual’s failure to understand them. ‘Poor health literacy’ is also represented as something which affects ‘a large part of the population’ suggesting that the problem is not entirely located in the individual (Scottish Government, 2010c:14). The term ‘capabilities’ is also introduced in ALIS 2020 suggesting an attempt to embrace a positive discourse in dialogue about literacy and numeracy policy. Frequent reference is made in the text of ALIS 2020 to capabilities. The following examples illustrate

> stronger literacies capabilities.
>
> literacies capabilities necessary to bridge the poverty gap
>
> Improved literacies capabilities
>
> Learners developing capabilities
>
> Lower literacies capabilities

Capabilities at the lower end of the scale

'Capabilities' is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English as 'the power or ability to do something' (Pearsall and Hanks, 2005:255)). The use of 'capabilities' in the text therefore has positive connotations in a way that the term 'skills' does not. It implies a notion of power and ability in literacy and numeracy learners and thus represents them positively as functioning members of society all be it with the potential to become more effective. However throughout the text 'capabilities' could also be seen as used synonymously with 'skills'. The terms are certainly used interchangeably and often together as the following excerpt illustrates.

> Improving adults' literacies capabilities is crucial to securing a competitive economy with more highly skilled and better paid jobs and higher productivity
> (Scottish Government, 2010:9)

Indeed in the following extracts from *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2007a) and *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth* (Scottish Government, 2010a) substituting 'capabilities' for 'skills' makes no substantive difference to the meaning of the extract.

> Improving the skills [capabilities] of individual employees should have benefits for both the employees and the employer
> (Scottish Government, 2007a:34)

> Collectively these commitments are aimed at improving the skills [capabilities] and employability of individuals and creating high skill [capability], high productivity, healthy workplaces where this talent can be best used
> (Scottish Government, 2010a:7)

The use of the term 'capabilities' could represent the development of a cohesive discourse about literacy, numeracy and social inclusion or alternatively it could be a linguistic device which gives apparent coherence to incoherent discourses.

Changes in discursive practices in policy texts can also be identified in relation to physical activity and I discuss these in the next section.

Discourses in Adult Physical Activity Policy

Adult physical activity policy is situated within the health improvement agenda in Scotland. Since the late 1990s this has mainly been about the causes of poor health and the ways in which to address it. The Scottish Office report *Social Inclusion – Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* noted Scotland's poor health record and the 'large differences in some aspects of the health of people living in the more affluent areas of Scotland, compared with the most deprived' (Scottish Office, 1999). The White Paper, *Towards a Healthier Scotland,* published in the same year identified 'tackling inequalities' as an overarching aim in its objective to improve Scotland's health record (Scottish Office, 1999b). In so saying an unequivocal link between poor health and social exclusion was acknowledged. The achievement of better health in the Scottish population has subsequently and consistently been presented in terms of addressing inequality, social exclusion and poverty through economic development. This approach acquired greater momentum with the election of the minority SNP Scottish government in 2007 but over the whole period the emphasis has been on fundamentally economic issues which militate against the achievement and maintenance of individual health and well-being (Scottish Office, 1999; Scottish Executive, 2003a; Scottish Government, 2007b, 2008b, 2010b; Department of Health, 2011).

The 1999 government White Paper, *Towards a Healthier Scotland,* acknowledged physical activity as making a 'vital contribution to positive health' and it also observed that a 'more integrated approach' would greatly enhance the impact of those 'working to encourage active living and physical exercise' (Scottish Office, 1999b paragraph 42 and 43). The setting up of a Task Force to develop a National Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland which brought together the key agencies in sport and leisure, education, health, fitness, exercise and play was an action which emanated from this White Paper and also from *Improving Health in Scotland: The Challenge* (Scottish Executive, 2003b). *Let's Make Scotland More Active: Physical Activity strategy* was published in February 2003 and set out the Scottish Executive strategy to increase levels of physical activity in Scotland. The Scottish Government has subsequently claimed (NHS, 2009a) that Scotland was one of the first countries in the world to have such a strategy in place. The strategy is aligned with the World

Health Organisation (WHO) policy on physical activity and reflects the five main strategies of the *Ottowa Charter for Health Promotion (1986)* which are: Building healthy public policy; Creating supportive environments; Strengthening community action; Developing personal skills and Directing health services at the people who need them most. *Let's Make Scotland More Active* (LMSMA) reflected this perspective in claiming that there was a need for comprehensive strategies and policies that had long-term funding if the problem of inactivity was to be addressed in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2003). In 2009 the group reviewing LMSMA supported this position by stating

> The review group believes the creation and adaption of environments that encourage and support physical activity offers the greatest potential to get the nation active
> (NHS, 2009a: 27).

However at the same time enacting individual behaviour change seemed to be a priority in policy. This is evident in particular from the way in which interventions primarily designed to raise the level of participation in sport and other organised activities through promotional campaigns have continued to prevail in government strategies.

In arguing the case for government intervention both on a strategic and individual basis to address low levels of physical activity in the Scottish population the Physical Activity Task Force highlighted the impact physical inactivity was having on the Scottish economy.

> The benefits will be reduced healthcare costs through the reduction of chronic disease and the potential contribution of physical activity to support the delivery of major social, economic, environmental and community policies is enormous
> (Scottish Executive, 2003:11).

The negative impact physical inactivity has on the economic well-being of the state is a theme consistently present in the Scottish physical activity policy agenda and is reflected in other physical activity related policy texts. For example in Healthy Eating, Active Living (Scottish Government, 2008e) an action plan which

deliberately linked physical activity and healthy eating policy the underlying economic issues driving policy were made explicit by the following statement.

> If we successfully tackle obesity then we will reduce ill-health which will in turn contribute to sustainable economic growth
> (Scottish Government, 2008e:2).

The policy agenda about physical activity is therefore situated, like adult literacy, firmly within an economic framework. In this framework a physically active individual is equated with a healthy individual and as such an economic asset as opposed to a drain on national resources. Accordingly a healthy individual does not make excessive demands on health services and has the potential to contribute to increased GDP. Within this overarching framework, two distinct discourses about physical activity can be identified in Scottish policy. These are both rooted in an interest to increase levels of individual physical activity but differ in views about how this can be achieved. The first discourse locates patterns of physical activity and inactivity as emanating principally from social and environmental conditions. This discourse reflects a view (Foresight, 2007) that the causes and thus solutions for increased levels of inactivity and obesity are located principally in the macro management of society. How individuals manage their own lives of course is of consequence but unless steps are taken to change an environment not conducive to healthy eating and active lifestyle then it is unlikely that current upward trends in obesity and inactivity in the adult population will be reversed. This discourse is therefore about macro level interventions conducive to healthier behaviours and implies action by governments and global organisations. The second discourse locates causes of inactivity and poor diet as the result of individual indiscipline and inertia. The discourse in the second case emphasises the need to change individual behaviours and it takes less account of wider social, economic and environmental factors which precipitate these behaviours. Raising individual awareness about the impact of specific behaviour patterns are therefore characteristic interventions promoted in this latter discourse.

I have identified two key policy texts which are specifically concerned with adult physical activity policy and provision in Scotland. These are *Lets Make Scotland More Active: A Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2003) and the Five-year review of *'Let's Make Scotland More Active' – A strategy for physical activity* (NHS, 2009a) and I focus upon these in this analysis. These policy texts currently reside within a wider policy health equalities and social justice framework which include the *Equally Well: Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities* (Scottish Government, 2008b), *Achieving our Potential* (Scottish Government, 2008a) and *The Early Years Framework* (Scottish Government, 2008c). In *The Equally Well Review* (Scottish Government, 2010d) the three texts mentioned above are identified as comprising the strategic policy framework for social justice and health equality in Scotland and one which extends across all life stages.

In these texts a tone of crisis is also detectable in a discourse which connects low levels of physical activity with rising levels of obesity and poor diet. All of these are represented as presenting a serious threat to the health and well-being of individuals and society in general and requiring urgent action. The relationship between physical activity and weight loss is tenuous (Bouchard and Blair, 1999) and the obesity crisis discourse and the associated policy links between physical activity and dietary matters may be more a reflection of moral and cultural attitudes and perspectives about body image, exercise and diet rather than sound empirical scientific research (Zeiff and Veri, 2009; Zeiff, 2011).

In the introduction to *LMSMA* the First Minister recognised that changes in physical activity levels in the adult population required 'effort across a wide range of policies – transport, education, social justice, health, housing and economic regeneration' (Scottish Executive, 2003:4). These references suggest an understanding that the causes of inactivity are located primarily in the contemporary organisation and structuring of society. In pointing out that 'it will take a lot of us, working together over many years, to change the social, cultural, economic and environmental roots of this problem' (Scottish Executive, 2003:4) he seemed to acknowledge how embedded inactivity had become in social practice and demonstrate an understanding

that the causes of physical inactivity cannot be located solely in the individual. This is a view reflected in *Healthy Eating, Active Living* (Scottish Government, 2008e) where the problem of obesity is likened to that of climate change requiring action at a strategic level if trends are to be reversed (Scottish Government, 2008e:2). A subsequent review of contemporary Scottish Government health, health equalities and social justice strategy (Scottish Government, 2010d:2) also summarised the factors leading to poor health as being 'not simply due to diet, smoking or other life style choices'. This review also focussed on the importance of environmental factors in achieving individual health and health equality and stated that 'a more collaborative approach across different public services is required' (Scottish Government, 2010d:3). This perspective echoed the overt policy discourse in LMSMA (Scottish Executive, 2003). However the subtext of LMSMA perhaps indicates that individual choices about physical activity are also seen as having their roots in moral and cultural mores and practices. Physical inactivity analysed from this perspective can be accounted for by individual lifestyle and choices rather than a consequence of environmental factors beyond individual control. I illustrate this perspective next using evidence from policy texts.

In 2003, LMSMA the report of the Physical Activity Task Force identified physical inactivity as a major threat to individual health and well-being. Physical activity is defined in the report as 'a broad term to describe movement of the body that uses energy' (Scottish Executive, 2003:12). In defining physical activity it makes reference to The First International Consensus Statement on physical activity, fitness and health which recognised physical activity as a general term. LMSMA identified several types of physical activity these included exercise, sport, play, dance and active living (described as: walking, housework and gardening). The Physical Activity Task Force in its report (Scottish Executive, 2003) therefore identified physical activity as an overarching concept which included sport, active living, recreational activity, exercise, play and dance. Indeed in 2007 this formal view was reinforced in the Scottish strategy for sport *Reaching Higher* in which sport was identified 'as one element of the wider physical activity spectrum' (Scottish Executive, 2007).

LMSMA made clear its focus and priority is to get inactive people to be active and to prevent people from reducing the amount of activity they currently do. Its agenda, it claimed, was not to raise levels of physical activity among those already active as this would give rise to even greater health inequalities (Scottish Executive, 2003). In LMSMA it was recommended that a sustainable and evidence based approach be adopted which took a holistic view of physical activity and identified that policy and practice should be driven by public, private and third sector partners. Strategic objectives and policy priorities about developing and maintaining long-lasting, high-quality physical environments to support inactive people to become active were accompanied by objectives about raising awareness and developing knowledge and understanding about the benefits of physical activity and providing access to information amongst children and young people, working age adults and older adults (Scottish Executive, 2003). LMSMA noted the 'social, cultural, economic and environmental roots' of physical inactivity and identified those in 'greatest need' as coming from 'deprived households' (Scottish Executive, 2003:4) thereby firmly establishing a link between physical inactivity and social exclusion. However the recommendations in the report do not seem to emphasise this link nor do the discourses about promoting individual behaviour change seem to take this in to account.

In many ways the foreword to LMSMA sets the underlying tone and message of the text despite the overt acknowledgement of the need for macro level social, economic and environmental interventions to reverse physical activity trends. The chair of the Physical Activity review group introduced the strategy by stating:

> This foreword is being written, ironically, in very inactive times, when the people of our country would rather drive than walk and when parents are terrified to let their children play in the streets because they are full of cars. Even in sport our rugby team has to be bolstered by overseas players and our Premier League football teams need to import players from all over the world to succeed (Scottish Executive 2003:6).

This statement seems to imply a culture of both lazy and irrational behaviour as lying behind physical inactivity. Sport seems to be understood as a preeminent aspect of physical activity - although one which Scottish people are not very good at given the

apparent need to ‘bolster’ teams and ‘import players’. The ‘massive health and sporting benefits’ for Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2003:7) to be derived from ‘a more active population’ underline the centring of sport in the discourses about physical activity. In suggesting that ‘even in sport’ recruitment of players is difficult is perhaps an indication that attitudes about physical activity are inextricably intertwined with attitudes about sport which are neither morally nor ideologically neutral. Policy makers, it seems, have difficulty disentangling these despite deliberately distinguishing sport as just one of several manifestations of physical activity in LMSMA (Scottish Executive, 2003:12).

The role of school physical education in establishing the habit of physical activity in individuals from a young age is a theme which permeates the text and prioritises sport and organised activity in the physical activity policy agenda. Schools are identified as having ‘a major role on a child’s physical activity’ (Scottish Executive, 2003:40) and it is claimed that

> Given the levels of inactivity in Scotland it is alarming that the amount of physical education in schools has gone down. There is clear evidence linking physical activity to people’s health. This shows the importance of physical education
> (Scottish Executive, 2003:44).

The link between physical activity and health is not disputed and has been evidenced, most recently in the joint report from the four Chief Medical Officers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2011). However that this is evidence for ‘the importance of physical education’ as is claimed in LMSMA is difficult to substantiate. Arguably, schools do have a ‘major role’ in shaping physical activity patterns in later life but there is evidence to suggest that this role can be both positive and negative (Cale and Harris, 2005; Strean, 2009; Dudley et al., 2011). However the assumption in LMSMA is that school physical education makes a positive contribution to engendering physically active adult lifestyles and that physical education is fundamental to sport participation in adult life. This is reflected in the references in the text to examples of ‘good practice’ about improved opportunities for participating in ‘a range of team and individual sports’, to the endorsement of these activities being ‘offered daily’ and to ‘a promotional campaign’

which ‘aims to motivate and encourage all pupils to take part’ in team sports and organised physical activity (Scottish Executive, 2003:42). All of these, I suggest, illustrate the value placed on school physical education as part of the strategic approach to addressing adult inactivity.

Views about physical activity and health expressed in LMSMA are neither ideologically or morally neutral and sometimes also cannot be substantiated in research. Attitudes about the role of physical activity in relation to education and to obesity are illustrative of this. First the presence of a moralising discourse about physical activity can be detected in LMSMA. In a statement which draws attention to the benefits of physical activity, in addition to reducing the risk factors for heart and circulatory disease, preventing weight gain and promoting positive mental health in children, it is pointed out that physical activity has a role in ‘improving social and moral development’. It is also suggested there ‘are many positive links’ in terms of academic achievements such as ‘ability to concentrate, lower levels of stress and anxiety, better classroom discipline’ (Scottish Executive, 2003:38)

Second, as previously indicated, Government interest in raising levels of physical activity both in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK stems from a concern to address the health of the population and take action to address causes and symptoms of poor health. Obesity is one area of concern together with coronary disease, depression and diabetes. These conditions are attributed to a range of factors some of which stem from poor diet and inactive lifestyles and are currently a focus of government health policy. According to data cited in the 2007 Foresight Report *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices* the reported levels of obesity have ‘more than doubled in the last 25 years in the UK’ and it extrapolates that by 2025, forty per cent of British people will be obese (Foresight, 2007:6).

Strategic approaches to public health increasingly acknowledge addressing inequalities in society as being fundamental to effecting change and require intervention principally at a strategic level although individual responsibility should continue to be acknowledged. For example the authors of the Foresight Report argue that:

> The deceptively simple issue of encouraging physical activity and modifying dietary habits, in reality, raises complex social and economic questions about the need to reshape public policy in food production, food manufacturing, healthcare, retail, education, culture and trade
> (Foresight, 2007:12).

The link between obesity and physical activity is therefore complex. Whilst physical activity contributes to improved health, its contribution to weight loss is not well established however this does not appear to deter policy writers from implying direct connections. LMSMA links 'the health effects of an inactive life' and 'growing levels of obesity' (Scottish Executive, 2003:17). It is suggested also that physical activity in children and young people 'helps prevent weight gain' (Scottish Executive, 2003:38). These associations are tentative in this 2003 document, a caution which seems to have disappeared in later policy texts although no new evidence had emerged in the interim to support such a shift. For example in *Healthy Eating, Active Living: An Action Plan to Improve Diet, Increase Physical Activity and Tackle Obesity 2008 – 2011* (Scottish Government, 2008e), a deliberate association is established, between physical activity and obesity, in the title and in the following statement:

> For the first time we are publishing jointly the actions we are taking on diet and physical activity over the next three years. We see greater opportunity in making linkages stronger and more relevant, not just within this plan but across wider Government activity
> (Scottish Government, 2008e:3)

Subsequently it was stated that 'It is well known that health benefits of diet and physical activity interact particularly in relation to obesity' (NHS, 2009a:24).

The discourses of physical activity in The *Five-year review of 'Let's Make Scotland More Active' – A strategy for physical activity* (NHS, 2009a) and the subsequent 'update' statement published in 2010 mirror the discourses of physical activity represented in LMSMA (Scottish Executive, 2003). Overtly the 'the creation and provision of environments that encourage and support physical activity' are identified as offering 'the greatest potential to get the nation active' (NHS, 2009a:iv)

but most of the evaluative commentaries in the review focus attention on the impact of individual interventions in precipitating behaviour change.

In particular sport appeared to occupy a more prominent position in the review document and this impression was substantiated in an analysis of both texts using Wordsmith 5.0 software. Wordlists produced for each text showed that while in LMSMA the words sport and sports constituted 0.23% of the total word count, in the review document these terms accounted for 0.27% of the total word count. In LMSMA other activities such as dance, play and exercise together with active living and recreational activity were identified with sport as aspects of physical activity however only passing reference was made to these in the review text. The 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow are also identified in the *Update Statement from the Review Group* (NHS, 2010) as a 'one-off opportunity...to build on and accelerate progress on the existing national strategies for physical activity and sport' further blurring the distinction between sport and physical activity which was made in LMSMA.

Likewise concerns about obesity appeared to have become more prominent in physical activity discourses. In LMSMA the word 'obesity' accounted for only 0.03% of the total word count however by 2009 'obesity' occurred at a rate of 0.2% of the total word count. This finding seems to indicate that physical activity is becoming increasingly perceived as a critical aspect of weight related health policy in spite of the fact that there has been nothing new in research to support this policy development.

The emphases in policy on individual weight management and improved health through the encouragement of higher levels of participation in organised physical activity suggests that, despite evidence and policy statements to the contrary, the way the 'social' problem is framed is disproportionately focussed on achieving individual behavioural change. Perhaps this is another example of the increasing influence of a neo-liberal discourse in policy which emphasises individual responsibility and the need to develop personal resilience in the face of adverse conditions.

Conclusion

Contradictory discourses are apparent in literacy and physical activity texts. The texts contain both visceral responses to social problems which are seen as an anathema to a just and socially inclusive society and more considered responses which are cognisant of the complex spheres of interest and influence which act together to precipitate conditions in which people are disadvantaged. In each case the different discourses can be interpreted as reflecting conscious and unconscious articulation of attitudes, views, opinions or ideologies.

However there is an underlying assumption that physical activity and literacy provision do have a role to play in addressing social exclusion and this role is principally about strengthening the individual. Strengthening the individual, relates primarily to a person's value, in terms of what they contribute to, and what they cost, the economy. In terms of literacy this relates to individual skills development and for physical activity to improved health. The former means individuals are better able to engage productively in the workforce and the latter, in addition, reduces healthcare costs. Together, both are of interest in policy terms because they constitute a contribution to achieving a higher rate of Gross Domestic Product.

Other discourses about the intrinsic value of learning and being active are present in policy. This is more evident in literacy policy texts than in physical activity texts. However the rationale for policy interest in physical activity and literacy is more evidently driven by economic interests in more recent documents especially since 2007. The promotion of economic development appears to be fundamental to current social policy and underpins the current Scottish Government's approach to addressing social exclusion.

Chapter 5

Findings – Practitioner Discourses

Introduction

In this chapter, I set out my findings from interviews with practitioners working in the fields of adult literacy and physical activity provision. The purpose of the interviews was to explore practitioner discourses of social exclusion. The specific questions my research aimed to address were:

- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

The interviews were designed to draw out practitioners' opinions and views about social exclusion and provide some insight to their perceptions about how literacy or physical activity addressed it. I asked practitioners to define social exclusion and to describe what they understood to be the cause or causes. I also sought their views about the efficacy of literacy or physical activity provision in addressing social exclusion and the criteria they used to evaluate their provision.

This chapter contains descriptions and illustrations of the ways in which practitioners characterised, interpreted and defined social exclusion. It shows that poverty, culture, lack of opportunity and individual deficit were themes that were referenced by both literacy and physical activity practitioners. It also presents evidence that practitioners drew upon policy criteria to determine what constituted social exclusion and thus determined a legitimate focus for their work. Practitioners' definitions of social exclusion indicated that they perceived it as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Levitas 2007 et al.) and this was evident from both the content of their responses and from the way these responses were framed.

Also included in this chapter are practitioners' perspectives on how adult literacy or physical activity provision helps address social exclusion and I draw attention to the differences and similarities between the discourses of these two groups. My evidence shows that discourses about practice and social exclusion were framed similarly, in

reference to employment, across both professions. It also showed that literacy and physical activity practitioners emphasised taking both a learner centred approach and the fundamental role of confidence building in their work.

How Practitioners Define Social Exclusion

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1997) and the Scottish Office (1999) each identified social exclusion as a state resulting from a combination of disadvantageous factors which influenced people's lives. This was a narrative to which Lister (2004) has drawn attention and which was echoed in practitioners' representations of social exclusion. Practitioners described a range of factors which interacted to disadvantage people and over which individuals were perceived to have varying degrees of control.

In this section I explore references to poverty, history, culture, lack of opportunity and individual deficit made by practitioners when defining social exclusion. I also describe their use of policy–led criteria in identifying how their provision was targeted.

Poverty, Culture, and History

Poverty was central to most practitioners' narratives about social exclusion. Sally's comments were quite typical and began with the assertion that 'well almost everybody would understand it's linked to poverty'. She expanded upon this by describing a more complex scenario saying,

> It's things to do with being unemployed or it could be to do with housing. We come across a lot of people that have health issues
> (Sally, Physical Activity Practitioner).

After a few explanatory comments about the types of health issues people experience she also said that social exclusion,

> Could be to do with unemployment it could be to do with their education as well. Educational background, that would be my understanding. But it goes beyond that it's to do with people, the culture as well within certain areas of

> [the city] I think over half of [the city] is deprived communities and there's clearly a different culture between the [west] and the [east] and it could be to do with using alcohol. People, you know you get a lot of people who are quite boasting about how much they had to drink that sort of thing. So, the social groups
> (Sally, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Sally identified poverty as a key factor in social exclusion but her description suggested she saw it as a more complex phenomenon. She makes connections to lack of paid work, poor health, lack of formal education and housing. Her reference to 'clearly' there being 'a different culture' between areas in the city, points to a recognition of the presence of factors other than material poverty in her definition of social exclusion.

Culture and history were identified by other practitioners too, as defining features of social exclusion. Alistair for example identified poverty as an important aspect, but life style, non-conformity and social segregation also figure in his analysis and characterisation. He explained that,

> In [this city] history is a large part of it. It is the way it has always been. We have some places that are fourth generation that have never worked and that is a historical side of things but we would still regard these people as being socially excluded because they don't have a lot of money.

He later clarified this point by saying,

> We would regard them as in that social exclusion category although it is the norm to these people it's history, it's tradition, it's culture that goes in to that but it is also things as I said about finance
> (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Fingeret (1983) in challenging the accuracy of portrayals of people, who experience social exclusion as vulnerable and inadequate, made the point that poor people have social networks but these networks are often different from those valued by the dominant social groups in society. Sally and Alistair's remarks seem to confirm their recognition of this point.

Practitioners' narratives, which referenced culture and history, were integrally linked to the view that lack of opportunity and access to services and facilities, were characteristic of social exclusion. Denial of access to public services, which are generally regarded as a social right, (Butchardt et al., 2002) was a recurrent theme. This perspective is illustrated by the following excerpt. Moira, when reflecting about social exclusion says it is,

> An inaccessibility of services isn't it? – If somebody is socially excluded to me then for whatever reasons they are not getting the wealth of opportunities that others are taking for granted
> (Moira, Literacy Practitioner).

History, culture and lack of opportunity are features, which in many ways are external to the individual. Social exclusion, however, was also defined by practitioners as an individual incapacity to cope adequately with the demands of everyday life.

> I hate the term but there is an underclass those who don't know through their educational abilities how to do things, people who don't have a range of skills that society deems as the norm, and don't have the knowledge to know how to access services that might better themselves or their family
> (George, Literacy Practitioner).

George's definition of social exclusion is ambiguous, as he does not identify what he thinks are the underlying reasons for people's lack of ability to access services, nor does he identify reasons for their lack of skills and absence of knowledge. His opening disclaimer (Van den Berg, 2004), 'I hate the term', serves to disassociate him from the moralising discourse with which the term 'underclass' is associated. His subsequent remarks indicated his empathetic disposition towards people experiencing social exclusion. However, his reference to 'lack of skills' which are 'the norm' and the idea that people 'might better themselves', is a discourse which individualises the causes of disadvantage and poverty.

The ways in which practitioners defined social exclusion, in relation to lack of opportunity and individual deficit, are explored next.

Lack of Opportunity versus Individual Deficit

The idea, that a socially excluded individual, is one who is denied access to 'opportunities that others are taking for granted' is a view that was often expressed by practitioners. Embedded in this view, is the implication that there is a responsibility, on the state, to ensure that all its citizens have a right and ability and the opportunity to access certain services.

Helen, in her comments, appeared to imply that these rights were not always met by the state and her references to 'mainstream society' and 'norms' suggests she saw social exclusion as something which was consequent on lack of toleration of difference in society. She also listed some of the factors which she thought contributed to social exclusion and these included 'a life style issue', 'language difficulties', and 'mental health'. She concluded by saying, 'There are lots of different reasons why they are being excluded'.

Intolerance of difference is a theme which several practitioners addressed in their narratives. Helen suggests that,

> a lot of time it [social exclusion] comes from society's pre-conceived ideas that - people just see others as a stereotype rather than looking at individuals on their own merits. You know – especially, mixed races, I think there is an awful lot of work to be done on that for people to see beyond the surface
> (Helen, Literacy Practitioner).

Jennifer echoed these sentiments and was concerned that lack of toleration of difference was becoming more prevalent,

> Poverty, lack of access to resources, being perceived in a certain way. Branded, you know, by the police and statutory agencies and I think it is the values of society, as well, are getting more polarised and it is not as inclusive, as broad as it used to be
> (Jennifer, Literacy Practitioner).

Whilst Helen and Jennifer appeared to concentrate upon societal attitudes in their narratives about social exclusion, other practitioners focussed upon the individual

and their unwillingness, or inability, to conform. Social exclusion as consequent on differing individual moral, social and cultural attitudes, was a theme in the discourse of several practitioners. For example David said,

> I think attitude is the key thing here because if people don't have the attitude it doesn't matter what facilities you throw at them or money or whatever they won't participate [pause] you've got to change the attitudes
> (David, Physical Activity Practitioner).

He developed this point by adding,

> The phrase I like to use is you know 'you give a man a fish you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish you feed him for life' and it's a case of with exercise, give them the knowledge so that they can help themselves
> (David, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Implicit in some practitioners' remarks therefore was the view that to be socially included involves not only the right to access public services and facilities, but also the responsibility on individuals to participate in the 'normal' social activities of society. Levitas (2005) draws attention to the normalising function of paid employment in contemporary society and it was clear from my findings that most practitioners regarded it as a central and 'normal' social activity. Consequently, paid employment clearly provided the pivot around which practitioners' definitions of social exclusion were constructed.

Most practitioners were of the opinion that it is both an individual right and responsibility to be in paid employment, but at the same time they acknowledged legitimate reasons such as childcare responsibilities (Liz, Literacy Practitioner) and poor mental or physical health as to why individuals should not be expected to work. Social exclusion was sometimes seen as emanating from the lack of enough or appropriate employment opportunities but it was also seen as resulting from unwillingness to work.

Sally talked about the importance of changing individuals' attitudes to paid employment. Her narrative was complex and sometimes contradictory. She stressed a

lack of local paid employment opportunities and emphasised reliance on benefits as an important defining feature of social exclusion saying,

> it's trying to change attitudes, but what's needed more than anything is probably more work
> (Sally, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Levitas (2005) and Lister (2004) both highlighted lack of economic conformity i.e. not being in paid employment, as a feature of social exclusion. They both drew attention to how non-engagement in the paid workforce by capable, working age adults is often seen as an anathema to mainstream social norms and values. In her narrative, Sally identified lack of paid work as a feature of social exclusion and her comments about some of the people she supported in her work exemplifies her perspective on the socialising function of work. She said,

> in one session we actually asked people about what causes them most stress and what came out was to do with their benefits. It was how they could keep on benefits. They didn't think about 'well if I get off benefits I'll be better off and it would be better for me and I would be engaging with other people and suppose I would be more included'. The attitude was 'how do I stay on incapacity benefit if I've worked all this time and I've worked my way up to getting this amount of money on incapacity benefit' and in the whole group - that was 14 people - it didn't occur to them 'well maybe I should try and get off benefits'. So that's attitude.

Sally's narrative portrays paid work as a positive activity and as an inclusionary force. It also contains an implicit criticism of life on benefits. This view however does not acknowledge the often isolating and debilitating effect of demeaning work on individuals and how some types of work can exclude individuals from 'the life of the community' (Levitas, 2005:60) through low pay and poor employment conditions. Subsequently when describing the volunteering activities of the same individuals within her organisation and the community and individual benefits which were accrued as a result Sally contradicted her previous remarks. She says,

> they love to be volunteers and they love to be involved but I think it is to do with the quality of work they are doing. Like that chap I [was] speaking

> about couldn't face going back to being a bus driver and also it wasn't that highly paid a job. So if he is on incapacity benefit he is now included because he is so involved in all our different groups. They are very happy but maybe he wasn't happy when he was working.

On the one hand Sally articulated value assumptions (Fairclough, 2003) which infer the economic and moral value of paid employment, however, her practical experience suggests a more complex and nuanced understanding of this and its relation to social exclusion. These tensions were evident in several of the practitioners' narratives and perhaps indicate a struggle to reconcile neo-liberal economic dogma with the evidence of everyday practice.

Policy-led Criteria

Practitioners drew upon personal resources and experiences but also upon policy-led criteria to provide definitions of social exclusion. These criteria determine what constitutes social exclusion and are based on economic and social statistical data and also on issues which have national or local political salience. For example, one literacy practitioner referred to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as the tool which was used to determine how social exclusion was defined at a local level.

> I suppose in terms of the council definition a lot of it we've maybe taken from government policy. So a big thing that we look at is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. I don't think the council has a definition that stands alone. It is very much looking at what, in government and the biggest one is probably looking at the 15% most deprived
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

The SIMD uses a series of indicators to rank small areas or data zones from the least to the most deprived (Scottish Government, 2012). When using the SIMD people often focus on the lowest ranking data zones. Sheila explained that the definition used was influenced by central government funding policies and that policy had a

geographic orientation. She explained that the council adopted a wider perspective on social exclusion than the government, in its own definition.

> [The council has] tried in recent years to move a bit away from just being solely geographic to also being cognisant that we have got communities of interests. So, for example [a] project based here which works with disadvantaged young people. By looking at the criteria we could work right across the city, the same with our literacies money
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

Applied in this way 'social exclusion' appeared to be an umbrella term for labelling individuals who or groups which corresponded to a bureaucratic pre-defined set of criteria about what constitutes poverty and disadvantage. The introduction of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) in 2007, as mechanisms for managing the fiscal relationship between central and local government in Scotland, were not perceived by practitioners as having a major impact on local social exclusion policies. Most practitioners reported continuity in the criteria used for defining social exclusion, by the current and previous governments, but they did suggest that greater emphasis was now placed on economic development, as a solution to social exclusion than had previously been the case. This they observed was apparent in an increased focus upon employment and employability. The following excerpt summarises this viewpoint.

> the only noticeable change is the big emphasis on the economic, you know the whole correlation between work and deprivation , that is very much focussed on the idea that deprivation, inclusion, poverty that whole link is related to employment. There is a big shift in that and that wasn't there under previous administrations
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

Framing Definitions of Social Exclusion

Definitions of social exclusion were framed by practitioners in different ways. It was clear to me that some practitioners found it quite challenging to summarise their understanding of social exclusion. So, eliciting a definition from them was difficult.

The following excerpt is illustrative of the way some practitioners struggled to articulate their views.

> I don't think you can give a definition I think it is I guess it is a lack of confidence and a lack of maybe knowledge [that prevents them] engaging in a particular community, something like that
> (Chloe, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Chloe, like many other practitioners, struggled to provide a concise and clear definition. Indeed the definitions offered by practitioners suggest that social exclusion was seen as a multi-dimensional and complex concept (Levitas et al., 2007). As I have shown, some practitioners defined social exclusion in terms of government measures, for example, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), whilst others drew upon their personal resources and values for a definition:

> I think inclusion is about reducing inequalities in society and it is about making it possible for the least advantaged groups not only to be supported but to be involved and engaged and participating whether that's in learning activity or in the life of their community whether that's an interest community or a geographic community
> (Gregor, Literacy Practitioner).

Some practitioners framed their definitions of social exclusion in narratives about social inclusion, as Gregor does in the extract above. In other words, they talked about what they did to promote social inclusion and thus avoided the problem of identifying or defining the concept or the nature of the problem that their provision addressed. David, like Gregor talked about social inclusion and likewise he did not articulate his understanding of social exclusion but instead, talked about how provision promoted social inclusion. For example,

> with inclusion you actually have defined criteria - people you are trying to include. With exclusion, by its very nature are the people that you don't know about so - what about all the other people you can't think of. So I think that's a lot harder to define because there could be lots of grey areas out there
> (David, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Alistair's comment below, also illustrates the way in which practitioners tended to conceptualise policy and practice around promoting social inclusion. His comments suggest that he understands social exclusion as an unintended consequence of other activities of the state (Estivill, 2003; Barnes, 2005; Landeman, 2006).

> I think the word exclusion makes it sound deliberate to me. I think that is why we tend to go inclusive because it is a positive angle on it. If we say social exclusion it sounds like there is a deliberate element in there – that is my personal opinion and that is why I struggle with the exclusion aspect of it
> (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Summary of Findings

Practitioners linked social exclusion to poverty, lack of access to public services and difference, related to gender, ethnicity, sexuality, lifestyle, disability and mental and physical health. These representations and descriptions of social exclusion in practitioners' narratives sometimes thematically and stylistically reflected representations and descriptions in policy texts. The conceptual metaphors which practitioners referenced in their talk about social exclusion were likewise present in policy texts. In particular, practitioners commonly conceptualised 'society as a container' (Koller and Davidson 2008: 307). This metaphor constructs society as a bounded space from which the poor and disadvantage are often excluded. Sharon (Literacy) and David (Physical Activity), for example described people experiencing social exclusion as 'out there', while Chloe (Physical Activity) and Moira (Literacy) described working with 'hard to reach' individuals and groups.

Most practitioners acknowledged that social and economic factors precipitated social exclusion but my findings suggested that most showed a tendency to dwell upon causal factors which were the result of individual characteristics. Practitioners therefore focussed upon individual lack of confidence as something which precipitated and was consequent upon social exclusion. My findings also indicated that practitioners rarely used the term 'social exclusion'. This meant they tended to articulate their practice not in how it addressed social exclusion but rather in how it

promoted inclusion. This was evident in some of my data which show that some practitioners did not provide a definition of social exclusion, even when pressed and seemed unwilling or unable to pin down the nature of the problem. The critique of social inclusion, that sees it as a discursive device (Estivill, 2003; Du Toit, 2004a) which avoids the difficult questions about poverty and unequal wealth distribution, seems an apt and is supported by my findings.

My analysis of the data also showed that practitioners understood social exclusion as a complex and multi-dimensional concept. Rather than define it, practitioners provided snapshots to illustrate their understandings and ways of perceiving it. Levitas (2006:125) argues that discourses of social exclusion have to 'be excavated' using the framework of RED, MUD and SID in order to gain some understanding because 'it is so rarely clearly defined'. In the next section I utilise this framework together with other approaches in order to explore how practitioners represented the causes of social exclusion and to elicit a deeper insight into their views.

Practitioners' Discourses about the Causes of Social Exclusion

During the interviews, practitioners were asked to explain what they understood to be the causes of social exclusion. I used two different approaches to elicit their views. The first approach required a spontaneous response to the question 'What do you think is the cause of social exclusion? The second approach required practitioners to identify which of three statements described how social exclusion is best addressed. Using the framework of RED, MUD and SID I had constructed three statements which reflected each of the discourses of social exclusion identified by Levitas (2005). RED, MUD and SID are respectively, a redistributive discourse which links social exclusion to poverty, a discourse that deploys cultural explanations of social exclusion and a discourse which analyses social exclusion mainly in relation to the labour market. The statements were:

- Reduction of poverty necessitates addressing poverty in society (RED)

- Reduction of social exclusion requires action to change attitudes of individuals to work and learning (MUD)

- Reduction of social exclusion will be achieved through access to and engagement in paid work (SID)

Although practitioners positioned themselves variously in relation to these three discourses, what emerged from my analysis was that the theme of paid employment was common to all practitioners' narratives. Again, this was consistent with Levitas' analysis of UK discourses of social exclusion in which paid employment was always present, but its role and the emphasis it was given was sometimes different (Levitas, 2005). Practitioners' descriptions of their understandings about the causes of social exclusion revealed that they saw social exclusion as a complex phenomenon. In analysing the data it also became clear that its complexity meant that practitioners did not often distinguish between definition, cause and effect when talking about social exclusion. This is illustrated in practitioners' narratives about confidence. Lack of confidence and low self-esteem, were referred to by most practitioners, as a feature of social exclusion. However, lack of confidence in individuals, is presented as both a contributory factor in the process of social exclusion and also as a consequence of that process.

Practitioner Responses to the Levitas Framework

Three practitioners, Caroline (physical activity), Jennifer and Sharon (literacy) identified RED as characterising the social exclusion discourse of their employer and as being embedded in their professional practice. Subsidised travel costs and pricing policies, which reduced access barriers to services and facilities, were cited as examples of policy and practice which were specifically designed to reduce the effects of poverty. They corresponded to a RED perspective on social exclusion. These three practitioners were all employed by the same local authority. Gregor (literacy), however, despite having the same employer identified SID as more characteristic of the local social exclusion discourse. It is not possible to reach a definitive conclusion as to the reason for this difference but my data indicate that

Caroline, Jennifer and Sharon in identifying RED were perhaps reflecting aspirations whereas Gregor's response reflected a more balanced analysis of the reality of the political environment in which provision was framed.

Gregor, Andrew, Alistair and Miriam each identified SID, with its emphasis on lack of paid work, as a characterising discourse about the underlying cause of social exclusion in their workplace. The other practitioners, ten in total, however, characterised social exclusion discourse in terms of a combination of SID and MUD reflecting a preoccupation with lack of paid work and with the individual's role as key contributory factors in social exclusion. Chloe and David, both physical activity practitioners identified attitudes about work and learning by individuals as being key factors in social exclusion and this MUD discourse of social exclusion was consistently evident in most of their discussion and observations about their practice.

Comparison of the ways that practitioners spontaneously described the causes of social exclusion and the statements which they identified sometimes revealed a cohesive narrative but sometimes exposed contradictions. Using excerpts from practitioners' narratives I illustrate some of the different ways in which informants spontaneously characterised the causes and how these related to the Levitas framework encapsulated in the statements they had been asked to consider.

Spontaneous Discourses about Social Exclusion

Jennifer, a Literacy Practitioner, identified systemic unfairness in society as the main causal factor in social exclusion and suggested that the solutions lay in changes to the welfare system rather than in changes to individual behaviour. She said that the best way to address social exclusion was to,

> put up the benefits by a lot. Put up the minimum wage. Give people a bit more respect. I definitely don't think we should be starting to encourage certain lifestyles and I don't know that work can bring income. People don't always get to choose how much work they do or where it is and it can have quite a big impact on their health and their family.

> You know I think everything is moving at the behest of capitalism
> (Jennifer, Literacy Practitioner).

This was a view consistent with the RED discourse, because she identified with those 'whose prime concern is poverty' (Levitas, 2005:7). However Caroline (Physical Activity) and Sharon (Literacy) who also identified RED, emphasised paid employment or lack of it as a defining feature of social exclusion. This, together with a narrative about enacting behavioural change through their practice, suggested they held a perspective more akin to SID or sometimes to MUD.

Gregor (Literacy), Andrew (Physical Activity), Alistair (Physical Activity) and Miriam (Literacy) each identified SID as characteristic of their employers' discourse of social exclusion, and a SID discourse is evident in the following excerpt, in which Andrew observed,

> I would assume there is a logic model of how to address poverty. You need to address employment issues and housing and accommodation issues. To do that the logical way would be to ensure everybody has a job, paid employment and then perhaps there will be a change in attitudes that comes with the empowerment that goes with earning a wage, the kind of socialisation that goes with being part of the paid work force
> (Andrew, Physical Activity).

Likewise Gregor remarked about his local professional context that,

> there are actions in place that are about increasing access to employment and supporting people both to access and engage in employment and those range from helping people develop skills and capacities that would enable them to access work through to actually just practically supporting them to get there whether that's financially or buddying them or a range of things in place that are about better enabling people to access paid employment
> (Gregor, Literacy Practitioner).

In both of the preceding excerpts, paid employment is represented as being a central aspect of strategies to address social exclusion and is consistent with a social integrationist discourse (SID), the focus of which is employment (Levitas, 2005).

Sheila's narrative however suggests an approach with a slightly wider focus. Her reference to 'poverty of aspiration', together with her view that the council needed to take 'different measures' to address social exclusion, suggests social exclusion is seen as deriving from a variety of causes, which are located both in institutional arrangements and in individuals.

> I suppose it depends on the definition of poverty we are not just talking about financial poverty you know we are talking about poverty of choices poverty of aspiration and I think that in terms of what this council tries to do is to try and take a more holistic approach to what is happening and to individuals and to communities and look at what different measures can be put in place to try and address that and I think there is the recognition that by tackling the different causes of poverty then that is where change will come
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

Sheila was amongst the group of practitioners who did not associate with a single discourse of social exclusion. It is clear from the extract above, that poverty and addressing poverty was fundamental to her understanding of the causes of social exclusion and elements of RED and SID can be seen in her remarks. Whilst Sheila identified poverty as a principal cause of social exclusion, other informants took a different view. Chloe rejected poverty as being key saying,

> You initially think it's lack of money and it might just well be that [but] for most people it's never lack of money it's just a lack of somebody to go with or they actually have a specific medical condition. There is no one reason, it's a whole plethora of different things that are coming into play
> (Chloe, Physical Activity Practitioner).

This view, that deprioritised poverty as a factor in the social exclusion equation, was not generally shared by other practitioners. More typical was the idea that a combination of different factors operated together and resulted in social exclusion. Alistair summed up what several practitioners described when he identified lack of equal opportunities, cited education and disability and recognised geographic isolation as factors in social exclusion. He said,

> It really comes down to equal opportunities. In many ways that really is what you are trying to do. This city by its very nature has pockets of exclusion all over the place on various different levels whether that is because of deprivation, education, in some cases disabilities - in many cases disabilities. But also [it is] just down to the degree of being able to travel to places. There are people we know in communities in this city that have never left that community
> (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

In practitioners' narratives the causes of social exclusion were often expressed in economic terms being related to poverty, lack of paid work and the consequences on people's lives. When talking about social exclusion practitioners also made reference to lack of confidence and represented it as both a cause and effect of poverty and disadvantage. It was a major theme in both literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses.

Social Exclusion and Confidence

Literacy and physical activity practitioners often focussed upon lack of skills and confidence as a feature of social exclusion and its causes. Lack of skills and confidence, together with low self-esteem, featured both as key contributory factors in social exclusion and as consequences of the process of social exclusion. Miriam's response exemplifies this, she said,

> Fundamentally what it comes down to in my experience is lack of confidence and self-esteem. Usually because when people have those they usually take themselves forward but lack of it often stops people
> (Miriam, Literacy Practitioner).

Similarly, Sharon appeared to locate the cause of social exclusion in the individual.

> For a lot of the learners I have worked with confidence is actually something that has socially excluded them. They don't want to try something new or they are maybe scared to go and ask
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

Chloe likewise emphasised lack of individual agency as the fundamental issue in social exclusion, but overtly rejected poverty as the main cause. She said,

> It's about a confidence thing for a lot of people it's about just that engagement process and knowing what to do where to go I mean you can, somebody that has the cash and all the rest of it but just can't do it for lack of confidence or they just don't know what is going on you know
> (Chloe, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Sharon, Miriam and Chloe each identified 'lack of confidence' as a barrier to individuals participating fully in society however, they did not offer an explanation as to why these individuals lacked confidence in the first place. Lack of confidence was sometimes recognised as a contributory factor in the process of social exclusion and sometimes it was identified as a debilitating effect. The following excerpt illustrates the former and the impact that literacy provision was perceived to make.

> For a lot of the learners I have worked with, confidence is actually something that has socially excluded them. They don't want to try something new or they are maybe scared to go and ask. For example [at] the job centre or other organisations what are the options available to them and certainly I have found that through literacies provision it has helped to increase people's confidence and make them not just more confident learners but more confident individuals and feel that they can go in and articulate ideas and have their point of view heard and get the fairest possible outcome
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

Some practitioners did reflect on the reasons that individuals lacked confidence in the first place. Moira, for example, reflected on the impact of previous life and learning experiences proposing some underlying social or learning disadvantages. These included young people having missed out on schooling as a result of exclusions precipitated by behavioural issues in class or individuals deploying avoidance tactics in learning to escape 'being labelled as someone who can't read and write or is stupid'. She explained lack of confidence could be accounted for by,

> the experience they have had quite early on because of their literacy needs or learning disabilities or difficulties
> (Moira, Literacy Practitioner).

Kathleen suggested that being 'fat' and 'unfit' had a detrimental impact on individual confidence. She described embarrassment about body shape and size and lack of conformity with ideals, portrayed in the media, as undermining confidence to participate in 'normal' social activities. She described how preconceived ideas undermine confidence to access physical activity provision.

> for a lot of people they see it as being a place for fit people and they still all have this stereo–typical image of the lycra and it just puts them off
> (Kathleen, Physical Activity Practitioner).

However Kathleen's strategy to tackle this lack of confidence, seemed to be to support people to emulate these lycra clad stereo-types, rather than facilitate recognition that physically active people come in all shapes and sizes.

Summary of Findings

My analysis showed that practitioners' discourses about the causes of social exclusion were sometimes inconsistent. Some practitioners identified one statement which corresponded to their understanding of social exclusion and they maintained a consistent discourse about the causes. For others their discourses overlapped two, or all three, of the statements. This was not an unexpected finding since Levitas (1998, 2005) described RED, SID and MUD as ideal types and explained that in reality 'much public discourse slides between them' (Levitas, 2005:22). My findings revealed that paid employment was a central feature of practitioners' discourses of social exclusion and this is consistent with discourses in policy.

The way in which the causal relationship between social exclusion and confidence operated was not pinned down by practitioners. What practitioners were very clear about however was the importance of building individual confidence and that achieving this was a key contribution that literacy and physical activity provision made, in addressing social exclusion.

In the following sections, I explore practitioners' narratives about confidence and other ways that practitioners articulated the relationship between literacy or physical activity provision and social exclusion. In order to make comparisons between literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses of social exclusion, I have addressed each type of provision separately.

How Literacy Provision Helps Address Social Exclusion

Literacy provision was seen by all of the practitioners as having the potential to address social exclusion. This contribution mainly related to how it supported individuals to develop skills and gain confidence. Literacy provision was thus seen by most practitioners as enhancing individual progression to other forms of education and into the job market.

The following comments by literacy practitioners illustrate the links that were made between learning and the reduction of social exclusion. In particular their comments suggested that they considered routes out of poverty via work to be enhanced by literacy provision. Practitioners, however, were cautious about overstating this link as this first excerpt illustrates.

> We have moved to the whole area of employability. A huge spectrum and there's a recognition, that for some people getting into work, getting ready for work is all that they are needing. A very small bit of help, to point them in the right direction. But for other people [they] have a whole lot of issues that need to be addressed and these are things that might be [about] employability but the recognition is that the end outcome won't necessarily at that point be a job. So, you could say for example someone is working on their literacies and you could say long term that would be something that would enhance their employability but what we are not saying is come to literacy and go into a job
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

In addition to increasing employability, most practitioners regarded good literacy skills or capabilities as a general requirement for being a fully integrated member of society, as the following excerpts show.

> Well, literacies is the most basic element to everything and I feel that if people don't have that ability to read and to write and to be able to take in information and understand it, without that ability it's almost impossible to then go on and do other things. Whether it be looking for work or you know other social activities because everything seems to revolve around being able to read information and sign your name and fill in this form or go on a computer. It just seems to impact on so many areas - personal or work life or community
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

Likewise, Gregor emphasised literacy as having a fundamental role in people's lives and he stressed that learning engenders confidence. He is careful, however, not to imply that literacy learning and increased confidence will provide a direct route into employment.

> Literacies is pretty fundamental and if you can get people to the point where they are more confidant as people and more confident as learners they are in a position to move on. But it may be still some steps away from securing the kind of employment they want or becoming engaged and included in other areas
> (Gregor, Literacy Practitioner).

Most practitioners talked about the limitations of literacy provision to make a difference to people's lives because of the size and nature of the problems they faced and the limited resources which were available. Moira's comments reflect these sentiments.

> I think if somebody's reading and writing and spelling – if their literacies levels are quite low then in a way their literacies are excluding them from participating in things. I think literacy, improving their literacy yes could hopefully lead to them being more included or at least having their voice heard which I think they quite often haven't had previously - yes literacy provision can go some way toward doing that but we don't have the capacity to make huge changes. I think there is a lot of really good quality work you can do but you have got to be realistic about what you are trying to make up for
> (Moira, Literacy Practitioner).

Although literacy practitioners were unanimous in the view that literacy provision did help address social exclusion, some literacy practitioners were sceptical about the depth of impact it could make. They acknowledged that literacy provision might potentially impact at an individual level, but they were less sure about the extent of its impact on poverty at a macro level.

> I don't see us as having any real effects on poverty issues other than the obvious one that if they - maybe move on to do a college course and become more qualified that eventually they'll pick up another job or they'll get employment so that, their poverty levels are going to change but I see us as being a lot more about building up the people we tend to work with here. I feel, it's a confidence and self-esteem issue
> (Helen, Literacy Practitioner).

This focus upon the individual, which Helen describes, is reflected in practitioners' preoccupation with confidence and the role of literacy provision in addressing its deficit in learners. The theme of building confidence in individuals recurs many times in practitioner's narratives about their practice and reflections about provision. Supporting individuals to develop confidence is therefore presented by practitioners as a fundamental aspect of literacy provision.

Although most practitioners associated lack of confidence in individuals with social exclusion, the dynamic of the relationships between these two things was obscure and not made explicit. Some practitioners implied that engagement in any form of learning would impact positively upon confidence levels and that the impact could not be attributed directly to literacy provision. The following examples illustrate.

> Learning in some form or other increases their confidence and self-esteem and makes them a bit more effective
> (Helen, Literacy Practitioner).

George, in his comments, emphasises what he saw as a pastoral responsibility in the literacy work he did. His references to 'relationship building' and 'underlying counselling role' illustrate.

> I think that what I'm trying to say about literacies is you can't divorce literacies from, the actual relationship building the confidence building the self-esteem the underlying counselling role that we all have in our work as well
> (George, Literacy Practitioner).

Several practitioners stressed the importance of understanding learning as a process and emphasised the learner centred nature of their practice. Miriam's comments were typical and her description of the approach she adopted reflects the tenor of policy and practice guidance in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2005).

> Well, I start with finding out what people want to do and why they want to do it but I would also be interested to know something about the other side of where they are in themselves. Where they are coming from empowering people, to use that phrase, and help people build confidence in themselves and start to believe in themselves
> (Miriam, Literacy Practitioner).

The theme of literacy provision, as a vehicle to engage or re-engage individuals in the process of learning and thus begin to address social exclusion, was evident in most practitioners' narratives. In particular, the effect provision had upon individuals' levels of confidence, recurred often.

> I think a lot of it [literacies provision] is to make them more confident in whatever area that is. It might be that they just need more education in some form or other. Learning in some form or other increases their confidence and self-esteem and makes them a bit more effective. But sometimes is it the old saying - something about all you need is 99% confidence and 1% ability - something like that. So I think if people have a bit more confidence and a bit more self-esteem that can then be transferred on to them maybe becoming more involved in their community
> (Helen, Literacy Practitioner).

Helen seemed to be making the point that, people have skills and abilities and that her role was to support individuals to develop the confidence to recognise those capabilities. This view of literacy provision possibly reflects an understanding of it, as something which extends beyond supporting the acquisition of a set of functional

skills. Perhaps, it indicates recognition of it as a civilising or even emancipatory tool (Hamilton, 2010). This perspective seemed to inform Moira's reflections about the relationship between confidence and social exclusion.

> I think a lot of our work is about getting people's confidence levels up and just trying to give them some positive learning experiences as well. Because I think, that as well contributes to exclusion. If you have had negative experiences, if anytime you have gone to learn something or tried to learn something new or taken part in something and you have had a negative experience that's going to cause you to be excluded because you think well, do I really want to put myself in that position again
> (Moira, Literacy Practitioner).

Some practitioners alluded indirectly to the relationship between literacy provision and its potential to empower and enable individuals, as Helen and Moira do in the excerpts above. In literacy practitioners' narratives, the term 'social practice' was used by most, to signify the approach they used in their work. Its use it seemed was intended to imply a critical and reflective approach and one that was driven by each learner's personal agenda. George, for example, used the term 'social practice model' and described it as an approach which is learner centred, requires consent and is responsive to learner needs.

> Everything we do is an approach with the permission of the group or the individual. As far as literacies per se is concerned you had to build bridges with the people. There was a lot a lot of confidence building because everybody knows more than they think they know in a language but the trick was trying to interest the people. I'm trained as an informal educator [and] a lot of what I was doing is based on the conversations of the group - something in the work place that was worrying them or perplexing them. So the lessons were based around citizen ship work - not necessarily citizenship but cultural awareness. For me literacies or whatever is supposed to really very much come from the people of the people for the people where the people want it
> (George, Literacy Practitioner).

Likewise, Miriam focused on reinforcement and supporting learners to reflect on the impact of their learning.

> Through the literacies and through the skills encouraging them and giving them positive feedback and helping themselves to see where they have made progress and helping them to recognise their own progress. Not so much what I think but I want them to realise what they can do for themselves
> (Miriam, Literacy Practitioner).

Sharon reflected that the impact of literacy learning emanates from the particular approach that is used, which extends beyond support to acquire specific functional literacy and numeracy skills.

> I think maybe it is a lot to do with our approach. They can build up a relationship. They can trust the tutors. They can talk to them and if there other things going on that they are having concerns about, there is that kind of support there for them. It just makes all the difference
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

Like most of the practitioners, what Sharon seemed to be describing was an approach which is learner centred and one which takes a perspective on the practitioners' role, seeing it as one of facilitating learning, which is responsive to peoples' lives.

Summary of Findings

Practitioners described literacy provision as having the capacity to support individuals to find routes out of poverty by increasing potential for employability. However they were tentative about over claiming this and some were sceptical about their capacity to make fundamental and sustained impact on poverty and social exclusion.

Most literacy practitioners viewed good functional literacy skills as a requirement for becoming a fully integrated member of society. One way that literacy provision was recognised as impacting on social exclusion was through its capacity to increase levels of confidence in individuals. Importantly practitioners seemed to consider that engagement in the process of learning was more significant than the content in addressing social exclusion.

Practitioners were vocal about the empowering capacity of literacy provision and about the pedagogical perspective –'social practice' which most claimed framed what they did. Whilst my findings show practitioners were empathetic to learners and adopted a learner centred approach, there was limited evidence to support claims that 'the power dimensions in literacy' (Hillier, 2006:175) which distinguish a social practice approach informed their practice.

How Physical Activity Provision Helps Address Social Exclusion

Physical activity practitioners regarded physical activity provision as having the capacity to address social exclusion. Practitioners assumed that provision enhanced opportunities for individuals to engage in health promoting activities which in turn better enabled people to enjoy healthier lifestyles and thus be more socially included. Notions of what constituted a healthier lifestyle related to diet, exercise and social interaction. In a similar way to literacy practitioners, physical practitioners identified lack of confidence as a both a cause and consequence of social exclusion. Supporting individuals to become more confident was therefore a recurrent theme in physical activity practitioners' discourses about their practice. Whereas all literacy practitioners interpreted social exclusion as meaning exclusion from wider social and economic activities that are identified as the key activities of a society (Burchardt et al 2003), some physical activity practitioners took a narrower perspective. When talking about how their provision could address social exclusion, they focussed upon strategies to encourage people to use sport facilities or engage in programmes of activities. This meant that their narratives focussed not on the reasons why people were marginalised and disadvantaged in society but rather on the reasons why people did not access facilities or services and what practitioners could do to change this.

Some physical activity practitioners made direct connections between physical activity and health. Physical Activity was regarded as an important factor in enabling people to be more active participants in society.

> One of the things we do know is that physical activity improves your health just by engaging with people and getting people along to our groups - so we don't have to prove that physical activity is going to improve their health. We look at social determinants of health you know if it has helped for socialisation and if they feel more included
> (Sally, Physical Activity Practitioner).

In the excerpt above, Sally asserts that physical activity makes an incontrovertible contribution to health. Her reference to 'socialisation' suggests she perceived that physical activity played a role in shaping individual behaviour and integrating individuals into society. These are assertions that mirror narratives in policy texts, for example, *Let's Make Scotland More Active* (Scottish Executive, 2003) and can be seen in both the written text and the images that are used to illustrate the document. Maureen also focused upon the socialising benefits of physical activity emphasising that the benefits of a physical activity programme, she ran for older adults, extended beyond achieving greater physical fitness or wellbeing. She emphasised that,

> The social factor the feel good factor the mixing is very important it's not just the exercise
> (Maureen, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Likewise, Andrew made reference to individual social benefits and the impact these have on the wider community. He described physical activity provision as having an impact on social exclusion because,

> Some of these things are very basic to community sustainability and to feeling like you belong to a place in which you enjoy living, you enjoy being part of you enjoy getting out and about and seeing people. Meeting people and enjoying the environment in which you live which is much bigger than just the physical activity and your own personal physical health and well being
> (Andrew, Physical Activity Practitioner).

However he was sceptical about the level of impact that provision made on social exclusion, despite his view about its potential to do so. He pointed out that lack of resourcing and inadequate understanding amongst health professionals and the public was a barrier to making a significant impact.

> I don't think [physical activity] has the resourcing or the level or the profile [to meet local needs].I think it's getting there and I think that people accept that it is important and it is a risk factor but it is still not as embedded in the culture particularly in the NHS. We have a core message about the [benefits of] moderate intensity [exercise but] it's not as well-known as your five a day in terms of eating. Physical activity I don't think is quite there yet. I don't think it has the profile, the funding
> (Andrew, Physical Activity Practitioner).

The social benefit of engagement in physical activity provision was a theme that permeated most practitioners' discourses. Chloe talked about the wider benefits and the impact she had seen in her local community.

> The group in the town is constituted and they just run themselves now and the nice thing about it is they engage. The community element is that when all the people that are actually living in and around the town met up with friends living you know two houses down it is just amazing and the stories that they told there are now a lot of social groups that have come off it that we sort of sign post to like churches that are offering lunches lunch clubs. It's just fantastic you know
> (Chloe, Physical Activity Practitioner).

David and Caroline, on the other hand, saw the health benefits as the most important impact and that it was through accruing these that provision addressed social exclusion most obviously. In the first excerpt below, David focused on the health benefits of physical activity whilst in the second excerpt Caroline focused upon body image. David emphasised the importance of people being personally active over participation in community activities saying,

> I personally feel that my role is at a much lower level. It is far more important to educate people to be aware of the health benefits by just doing everyday activities to keep fit rather than having to participate. So I feel that is a much more important role if I do that part of the job. If we get people to use facilities more or go to classes or whatever that to me is a bonus but the important thing is that they get health benefits out of it and change their life
> (David, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Caroline described how physical activity helped address social exclusion, by citing the example of a woman who 'was so depressed about her image' because she believed she was overweight. Caroline described how, she 'Couldn't even look at herself in the mirror'. She then described the personal life-changing impact of physical activity.

> She probably uses the facility five or six days a week. The change in that lady is absolutely incredible. She has lost a lot of weight in conjunction with the exercise. We started off on a one to one basis in exercise referral. She went through the programme and she now comes to body pump. She comes to cycling and she'll be in her early sixties. She's a granny and she looks fantastic now
> (Caroline, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Caroline's comment reflected the power of normative views about how body shape and size (Zanker and Gard, 2008), can impact upon an individual's sense of well-being and inclusion. Interestingly, Caroline did not appear to challenge the validity of these views, but rather her strategy seemed to be more about giving support so that the woman she described could better conform.

Alistair saw physical activity as having an impact beyond personal health, well-being and education and spoke about its effect on social interaction. Specifically in relation to sport and work with young adults, he described physical activity as 'an early intervention tool' with positive benefits for communities. He was careful not to over claim but emphasised physical activity had a contribution to make.

> I am not saying we have the answers to all the problems but certainly I like to think we put a positive approach back into those communities and anything positive going in has got to be a good thing. So for me we are an early intervention tool
> (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

As with literacy, supporting individuals to develop confidence was seen as a key way that physical activity provision could address social exclusion. One facet of this function, which physical activity practitioners stressed, was relationship building. Caroline explained that when working with individuals, her initial tasks were,

> to try to put them at ease, to break down any barriers, to find out what is going to motivate them. To build up the rapport with the person and find out as much as you can about them and listen to them
> (Caroline, Physical Activity Practitioner).

She explained that in her work people looked for support in areas that were not directly related to physical activity saying 'they even come to you with personal [issues] nothing to do with [physical activity]'. She emphasised the incremental and long term nature of the confidence building work she did and the importance of individuals developing trust in her as a practitioner. She said,

> You might not necessarily lose a lot of weight or notice a huge change to start off with but little changes, that's what they notice and then you start to build on that
> (Caroline, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Alistair explored confidence in some detail and he too emphasised the importance of good interpersonal relationships for effective physical activity provision. He said that,

> People will have opinions on things but they don't want to put them forward because they have never been told they are valuable
> (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

He therefore emphasised the importance of confidence in enabling individuals to articulate views and opinions. However he was of the opinion that, confidence was something that had to be built and developed. He said, 'It is like trust it is earned'. He expressed irritation with the idea that people, who were disadvantaged socially and economically, ought to take more control over their lives saying, 'Well they need to have something to be confident about'. He referred to the importance of 'early intervention' in avoiding social exclusion and described effective physical activity provision, in building confidence, as a long term project saying,

> It takes investment, it takes knowledge. It takes the ability of the person and trust. So there needs to be a relationship there in the first place and that is what the youth sport team do, in terms of being immersed in the community
> (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Alistair's view was that such investment produced very tangible individual skills and knowledge which in turn resulted in increased confidence. In saying this he, unlike other practitioners, placed equal importance on content and process for achieving social exclusion objectives.

Physical activity practitioners often appeared to adopt an overtly prescriptive approach to their work. Chloe described investing a lot of time in relationship building with individuals and groups before she could,

> start to sign-post or give information or actually get them to engage in the things that I want them to engage in because I know that it's good for them
> (Chloe, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Other physical activity practitioners also described using approaches intended to facilitate behavioural change but these were articulated in a more subtle way. One, for example, said,

> We are trying to break down that reluctance to participate by showing them it can be enjoyable
> (Caroline, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Practitioners' discourses reflected an agenda to enact behavioural change by encouraging excluded 'others' to increase their levels of physical activity. Underlying this agenda were assumptions about what constitutes healthy and normal behaviour and importantly what is good for people. David's comments, like Caroline's and Chloe's, were characterised by their apparent 'othering' of inactive individuals and groups. An example was David's description of his approach, he said:

> I do what I can to try and integrate as much as I can with the communities. It's a case of with exercise – give **them** the knowledge so that **they** can help themselves
> (David, Physical Activity Practitioner).

'Othering' has been described as something done by those who consider themselves normal, to those considered abnormal (Foucault, 1990). Lister (2008:1), noted the 'othering' of people in poverty is, at worst 'motivated by hostility' and at best, 'by indifference or even sympathy'. She commented on how easy it is to 'slip into

sympathetic othering'. Lister (2008:1), pointed out that often people experiencing poverty and disadvantage, are seen and treated as 'other' rather than as fellow equal citizens and human beings'. The reason for this she suggested is linked to how the causes of poverty and disadvantage are understood. David, Caroline and Chloe's consistent use of the pronouns 'them' and 'they' to talk about the groups and individuals with whom they engaged may provide some insight to their perceptions and understanding about social exclusion and its causes, but the tone of their comments also resonate with policy texts. In particular the theme of individuals being equipped to 'help themselves' expressed by David is one that pervades policy texts. The Scottish Government (2008a:9) described being 'committed to' approaches which empower individuals 'to make a difference to their own lives' and developing individual resilience'.

Physical activity practitioners made little direct reference to pedagogy and the practices they employed to achieve social exclusion outcomes. Two practitioners did describe using 'a community development approach' in their work. Sally characterised her approach as community development saying,

> Initially we go and work mostly in groups – we do some one to one support but we engage with people in different ways. We actually get groups of people together we ask them to identify their needs we don't tell them for example you have to stop smoking. Maybe first of all they might think about physical activity as a way to meet people not to improve health
> (Sally, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Community learning and development is defined (Scottish Executive 2004:7) as 'learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods'. The defining feature (ibid) is the way that 'programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants'. However some of the comments that physical activity practitioners made (for example Chloe), suggest that the approach being employed is one of subtle persuasion, rather than dialogue.

Summary of Findings

Practitioners recognised health and social benefits as the principal ways in which physical activity provision could address social exclusion. Physical activity provision was seen as providing encouragement and opportunities to engage in health promoting activities which in turn better enabled individuals to enjoy healthier lifestyles.

Physical activity practitioners acknowledged the central role of employment in promoting social exclusion but had little to say about the contribution physical activity made in this respect and unlike literacy practitioners did not link provision to finding routes out of poverty.

As with adult literacy practitioners, confidence building featured for physical activity practitioners as a key way in which provision addressed social exclusion. Practitioners were particularly vocal about the capacity of physical activity provision to build individual confidence. However with the exception of one practitioner, they did not define how this was achieved. Alistair however was very clear that the substantive learning content in physical activity provision was critical in building confidence. In contrast to literacy practitioners, physical activity practitioners were not very vocal about a pedagogical perspective in their work, although reference was made to adopting a community development approach by a few individuals.

Discourses about Social Exclusion and Evaluation of Practice

I have shown, in the previous sections, that all of the practitioners described their provision as having the potential to address social exclusion. I wanted to find out how practitioners knew if their provision was effective in doing this and what methods they used to evaluate and measure the impact of their practice. I also wanted to explore the nature of their discourses about evaluation and whether these corresponded with other discourses about practice. I therefore asked practitioners to describe what they did to evaluate the impact of their provision.

Practitioners described both formal and informal approaches to evaluation. They made reference to formally established performance indicators which included statistical data about the number of people accessing services and measurable outcomes such as progression to other forms of education or to employment. The discussions included commentary on the introduction of new fiscal and governance arrangements which placed greater emphasis than previously on the outcome of provision. I wanted to know how this affected evaluation procedures and if practitioners thought the approach adequately reflected the impact of provision on social exclusion.

Since 2007, Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) have determined how Scottish Local Authorities set local priorities and deliver services in line with national policy objectives. According to the Scottish Government (2007), these changes in governance arrangements give greater autonomy to local authorities to set their own policy agenda. Practitioners described how the introduction of SOAs had affected provision at local level and noted little change in day to day practices. Most practitioners described the SOA as a new way of framing existing strategy and provision and at a practical reporting level had a minimal impact upon practice. Sheila for example noted no difference in what she was required to do.

> to be honest it is not that we are doing anything new through it - it is just a different framework for doing the same. So, I don't think it has made a huge difference because I think a lot of the things we were already doing
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

Most practitioners however were quite cautious in assessing the impact of the new governance arrangements that were encapsulated in the SOAs because they felt that it was too early to reach a firm view. It was anticipated, by one practitioner, that in the longer term an outcome focussed approach to strategic management would necessitate radically different ways of managing services in the future and he said,

> I think at the moment [the impact] is limited but I think that is because the single outcome agreement is a relatively new phenomenon and its impact will increase over time because it is requiring quite a mind shift for people to be more outcome focussed in

> the way they think and plan and to think less in terms of particular services or occupations and professions (Gregor, Literacy Practitioner).

Gregor may be implying here that the policy interest is becoming more focussed on results (outcomes), as opposed to the process, methods or strategy at local level. Another literacy practitioner echoed the Scottish Government's perspective on SOAs suggesting that they gave greater autonomy to local authorities. However contradictorily, she also implied a more directive approach by central government. Liz said that,

> I think in general the single outcome agreement has been like a breath of fresh air because for once there has been a real clarity about what the government are expecting to be the outcomes that people should be delivering on. I think it is great not to have all these different things coming at us (Liz, Literacy Practitioner).

In saying this, I assume she was implying that previously there had been a lack of clarity about policy and expectations on local authorities and more micro management by central government of local provision.

One physical activity practitioner was critical of SOAs, on the grounds that they reduced local autonomy. He believed they did not support a community led approach to local strategic planning describing them as, a 'top down' approach, with nationally set targets, requiring compliance at a local level. He argued that they reduced local independence to set policy objectives that 'would help improve our life, our social inclusion'. He was concerned that if local priorities did not reflect those which had been established at a national level then local authorities would fail to attract adequate funding to meet local needs. He commented that,

> The difficulty with [SOAs] is there are national priorities which have to be met. The automatic response is to protect your funding and to meet these rather than identifying key priority areas we have got for this city (Alistair, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Gregor reflected about the complexity of operating within an outcome led framework. He suggested that the achievement of outcomes might be dependent on

factors which were outside the scope of adult literacy provision. He referred to 'the way the indicator is framed in the national performance framework'. Literacy and Numeracy is specifically identified as one of the National Indicators and Performance Targets (Scottish Government, 2007c) and is articulated as 'Reduce number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems'. Gregor said,

> I think [it is] interesting and difficult in the sense that it talks about the reduction of the number of adults at working age – well yea I'm not sure how we ever find that out. I am sure we could find out how many people we work with who improve their literacies therefore are better enabled by that but how much we can know what's coming in at the bottom end and have a real handle on that I'm not entirely sure and I think there are lots of contradictory pieces of information and evidence around improvement and results in schools which suggests that there's a reduction in the number of people who come into the adult working population who have got literacy difficulties and experience wouldn't always square up with that
> (Gregor, Literacy Practitioner).

The point Gregor was making seemed to be that adult literacy provision has a limited capacity 'to reduce the number of working age adults with severe literacy and numeracy difficulties' (Scottish Government, 2007c), which was one of the Governments performance indicators until December 2011. His point was that despite adult literacy providers' best efforts, if the number of individuals leaving formal education with literacy and numeracy difficulties rise, then achievement of this outcome will be difficult.

The 'onerous' nature of the 'performance management culture' was alluded to by several practitioners and addressed directly by one physical activity practitioner. He made reference to, the increasing requirement to provide evidence of impact in order to justify and maintain provision. Andrew observed that the benefits of increased physical activity are well researched and indicate impact beyond individual health and sense of well-being and therefore, should be accepted as self-evident truth saying,

> you can't do something unless it's justified when ultimately we do know that we need to be more active, there's no question about that, look at the research, look at the evidence - but we're still, dancing around [saying] we can't really invest in it because we don't really know if it has an impact or not and we can't measure it because we don't know how active somebody has actually been, if what we're doing is the right thing or not
> (Andrew, Physical Activity Practitioner).

This view, underpinned by an assumption about the inherent value of physical activity provision, is quite widespread in policy and practice discourse. For example, Chloe, when asked how she knew if her provision was effective said, 'I just know that it is good for them'.

Measuring and evaluating the impact of provision seemed problematic for most literacy and physical activity informants. Gregor's comments sum up the views of several of the literacy informants from across the different geographic areas.

> I think in general terms we are much better at assessing, evaluating the intermediate outcomes of our interventions. But I suppose that would be about assessment and evaluation for learning. At organisational level we draw that together on an annual basis using the impact indicator for learners. We also make use of the inclusion indicator in the How Good is framework and that is embedded in what we ask all of our teams to do. We do use that to try and keep people's focus on inclusion issues - because I think that generally is one of the things that motivates and drives people in terms of the broader impact. We do need to get better at that though so that we can see longer term impact
> (Gregor, Literacy Practitioner).

Gregor was referring here to *How Good is Our Community Learning and Development 2* (HMIE 2006), a self-evaluation tool widely used by Community Learning and Development managers and practitioners in the public and voluntary sectors in Scotland. The inclusion indicator, against which providers evaluate their performance, considers inclusion of excluded communities, groups and individuals; addressing barriers to participation; access to specialist services to meet specific

needs; promoting inclusion, equality, fairness and positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity; and compliance with equalities legislation (HMIE, 2006:22).

Gregor's observations were mirrored in the way most respondents described the impact of their provision. They tended to talk about how it impacted at individual level and in the context of short term outcomes.

Physical activity and literacy practitioners were differentiated by the types of measures they used to assess and evaluate the impact of provision. Physical activity practitioners seemed to make more use of quantitative and qualitative tools which included anecdotal material to describe the impact of provision. For example, Maureen explained how she evaluated the provision at her sport centre saying,

> We track each month the attendance in classes so I'll know if its dropping off and I'll look at the attendance and the numbers and I'll say 'that's not been so well attended - have you asked people what they want?' 'Why are they not coming?' So that is when it will kick in to find out why people are not coming. But we don't track each individual
> (Maureen, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Literacy practitioners also used quantitative tools, but in a more limited way. Sheila explained that the criteria she used to measure impact in literacy provision was highly individual and based upon how learners identified progress in terms of their self-determined, individual learning plans.

> We use a number of different measures. But the main thing is that we will ask people. Everybody has individual learning plans and these are reviewed so looking at what people are saying as a result of their reviews, what is on their learning plan and where they feel they have got to. So [for example], we are asking about increase in confidence. Do they feel they have become successful learners and effective contributors and responsible citizens? It just depends
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

Several literacy practitioners were concerned that 'formal' or 'bureaucratic' methods of evaluation were insufficiently sensitive to the whole extent and nature of provision. She acknowledged the importance of collecting quantitative data in

relation to maintaining funding for the provision but the sorts of impact it recorded did not accurately reflect the range and types of impact that provision facilitated.

> I know they talk a lot about soft outcomes and hard outcomes and I feel that there is an awful lot of emphasis on [whether] this person has progressed on to college or volunteering or work. These kind of things are regarded really highly and quite rightly so. But sometimes you have got to appreciate smaller things. The simplest of things, that others would take for granted, like one woman who is now able to go to the bank and sign her name on her own, to withdraw her own money. That doesn't tend to fit in with government statistics and the kind of things they are looking for. But, for that learner, that's an absolutely massive impact that's had more of an influence on her day to day life than anything else. So there is that kind of disparity. Sometimes you don't think the learner is being taken into account as an individual. For some people college isn't going to be an option for another good few years, if ever so, rather than looking at these huge goals, there should be a bit more appreciation of the smaller things
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

The views expressed by Sharon were broadly shared by the other literacy practitioners in my research and there seemed to be consensus that, quantitative data and the type of statistical data demanded was too blunt a tool to be useful.

One literacy practitioner however described using a mix of qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the impact of local provision. She highlighted the importance of individually set criteria in the evaluation process and made reference to individual learning plans, to talking to learners and to national guidance as resources in the process.

> We use a number of different things. We use formal measures but the main thing is that we will ask people. Everybody has individual learning plans and these are reviewed. So it will be looking at interpretations of what people are saying and what is on their learning plan and where they feel they have got to. We have also got a data management system and the feedback from the reviews is grouped in four areas using Delivering Change CLD document
> (Sheila, Literacy Practitioner).

Sheila identified a range of subjective measures which learners were asked to consider themselves against since engaging with the provision. These included 'increase in confidence levels' and whether they considered themselves to have become 'successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens'. She explained that the measures used corresponded to learner self-identified learning goals. Liz similarly explained that the measures used to evaluate impact are 'built around what the individual's needs are' but she also seemed to suggest that the effectiveness of provision was evaluated in term of the degree to which learners' personal goals corresponded to externally determined outcomes.

Physical activity and literacy practitioners used anecdotes to illustrate the impact of their provision on individual lives and on changing behaviours. They also described the informal ways that impact is often identified and recorded. For example, Sharon described a learner who had come to literacy provision with the objective of learning to write her own shopping list. Sharon recounted how she had become aware only by chance that the learner had achieved her aim.

> I work with a learner on a Wednesday and I was just having a chat with her and asking what she had been up to and she had said 'oh I was just writing out my shopping list because I am going to the shops after I have been here' and I thought for a minute and said 'oh you are doing your shopping list?' and she hadn't really realised that 'oh I'm actually able to do what I set out to do'. It was purely dropped informally into the conversation
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

Sharon went on to argue that perhaps informal methods of gathering information were the most effective ways to evaluate provision saying,

> You can do an evaluation and get people to fill in a questionnaire or get direct feedback but the biggest thing is keeping your ears open and listening to the things that people are saying. [Things]that they may drop informally into a conversation. People don't like to come up and say 'well do you know I actually feel a much more confident person' they won't explicitly say that. So, it's about getting to know somebody. But there is an element of having to show the learner the impact because they start to take all these little increases for granted
> (Sharon, Literacy Practitioner).

Sharon's point reflected a common perspective amongst physical activity and literacy practitioners that emphasised the importance they placed upon the development and maintenance of trusting relationships in their work with groups and individuals.

In assessing the impact of provision in addressing social exclusion, some practitioners were very positive and regarded their provision as having a significant impact geographically and on individuals. However these evaluations were usually arrived at subjectively and based on anecdotal evidence. Maureen for example said,

> I personally think we are ahead of the game. I think we are very good. I think we do cover a lot of fields we are learning each week. I mean there are masses that we are doing in [the area] for covering all gaps to include everybody and just raise awareness. We are very much ahead we're tapping into a lot of different funding to cover gaps. We are covering a lot of different populations trying to cover everybody. Include everybody
> (Maureen, Physical Activity Practitioner).

Andrew however was more circumspect about the impact of provision on social exclusion and how possible it is to know if it is having any effect. He said,

> I think partly the difficulty [is] there are so many different ways you can be active and so many different influencing factors on that from the environment that would encourage you to walk to the shops for example, to more resource intensive exercise on prescription schemes where you're actually trying to effect behavioural change and life style management
> (Andrew, Physical Activity Practitioner).

The differences in these two contrasting perspectives may reflect, in one case aspiration for provision and in the latter case, a more reflective view, conveying the realities of what provision can in fact achieve.

Summary of Findings

Practitioners' discussions about evaluation focussed mainly on how the impact of provision could be measured at an individual level. This focus was consistent with practitioners' discourses about social exclusion and how provision contributed to supporting people to acquire the skills, knowledge and capabilities to participate in normative activities around paid employment and social life.

It was clear however, that practitioners were sceptical about the value of formal evaluation approaches in their work and the efficacy of these in assessing the degree to which it addressed social exclusion. Their scepticism reflected a view that these approaches took insufficient account of the incremental nature of the impact of learning on individuals. Practitioners seemed to rely quite heavily on anecdotal evidence which illustrated small changes in people's level of confidence as a result of engagement in different forms of provision. Most practitioners therefore seemed to regard formal evaluation as onerous, but necessary, but not always relevant, in informing their day to day work in promoting social inclusion.

In the next and final section in this chapter, I conclude by reiterating and summarising the similarities and differences between literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion.

Characterisations, Interpretations, Similarities and Differences in Discourses.

The research questions which I addressed in this chapter were:

- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

My findings suggest that practitioners' discourses were complex and sometimes contradictory. My analysis showed that all practitioners' perceived social exclusion as complicated and multi-dimensional. Poverty was linked in most practitioners' narratives to social exclusion but conceptualisations of the phenomenon extended beyond material poverty. Social exclusion was also described as arising from failure or unwillingness to conform to social norms and values. My analysis of the data showed that practitioners' understanding of the definitions, causes and effects of social exclusion overlapped and were often indistinct but that non-participation in the 'normal' activities of society was a defining feature in practitioners' narratives about social exclusion.

Paid employment was a referent for all practitioners' narratives about social exclusion. It was a recurrent theme and was represented as pivotal in the achievement of personal success and prosperity in practitioners' discourses. Although practitioners acknowledged that factors external to the individual often influenced availability of and opportunities for paid employment, their narratives suggested that facilitating individual changes, in terms of attitude and learning, was regarded as the most effective route into employment and thus out of exclusion. One example of the impact practitioners felt their provision could make in achieving this was its capacity to address lack of confidence in individuals. Literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses were similar in that most agreed that engagement in any form of learning was a principal aspect of building confidence and that the content of the provision was of secondary importance.

All practitioners claimed provision had the capacity to address social exclusion and similarly recognised practice as mainly impacting in this respect at an individual level. Literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses were also similar in that they mostly articulated understanding and views about social exclusion by framing the narratives in relation to how practice promoted social inclusion. This positive representation mirrors the narrative in Scottish policy texts. In the case of literacy provision these narratives emphasised increased well-being achieved through access to paid work facilitated by literacy learning. In the case of physical activity the focus was on increasing individual activity levels and thus health and well-being particularly through participation in sport and organised exercise. Both groups of practitioners, in focussing their provision in this way, were reflecting ideas about social inclusion as involving the social integration of people into practices and behaviours which conformed to dominant social values and norms. My analysis of practitioners' views about evaluation reinforced previous findings that a social integrationist discourse of social exclusion (SID) predominated, which valorised paid employment. This was also consistent with my findings that most practitioners' discourses about social exclusion and practice were centred on facilitating individual progression and resilience to cope, through the deployment of confidence building interventions.

Significant differences in the discourses of literacy and physical activity practitioners were apparent in the way that literacy practitioners drew on a common repertoire or shared vocabulary to talk about their practice and which reflected the language of policy texts. In other words literacy practitioners talked about the capacity of literacy provision to address social exclusion in quite consistent ways, a feature which was not evident in physical activity practitioners discourses.

This difference is illustrated in literacy practitioners' references to a common pedagogical perspective which was variously described as a 'social practice' model or approach. Another example was literacy practitioners' use of the term 'literacies' as opposed to 'literacy' which was a feature across the interview data. However, my analysis of literacy practitioners' descriptions of their practice and their understandings of social exclusion suggest that, common attachments to 'social

practice' and other uses of shared language masked differences in philosophical perspectives and practice approaches.

Physical activity practitioners in contrast did not draw on a common vocabulary and tended to speak about their practice in more diverse ways. The discourses of physical activity practitioners also differed from literacy practitioners in that most tended to talk about social exclusion as it pertained directly to physical activity provision. This means they focussed on how individuals were specifically excluded from physical activity provision rather than from more general social activities (e.g. paid employment and access to public services).

In the following chapter I discuss my findings and highlight the economic and instrumentalist discourses which characterise most practitioners' narratives about their practice and social exclusion. I consider the implications of practitioners' preoccupation with confidence building in addressing social exclusion and I discuss some of the differences between literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about practice and reflect on possible reasons and effects of these distinctions.

Chapter 6

Discussions

Introduction

My analysis of the findings of this research identified some themes, patterns and similarities in practitioners' discourses about social exclusion, adult literacy provision and physical activity provision. It also identified differences and discontinuities in the data.

In this chapter I discuss my research findings from a Foucauldian perspective and address two of my three research questions. These questions are:

- How is social exclusion represented and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

The remaining questioning

- How is social exclusion conceptualised and represented in policy texts?

has been addressed previously in Chapter Four.

The discussions in this chapter are my interpretative account of practitioners' discursive practices. This interpretation is supported by evidence from the data, however, I acknowledge the possibility for alternative readings because, like the subjects of my research, I am equally subject to the 'systems of exclusions' and the 'other procedures for controlling and delimiting discourse' (Foucault, 1970:55).

Doing Critical Discourse Analysis with a Foucauldian Perspective

Doing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is about discovering how public and private discourse is shaped and governed. The purpose is to make apparent the taken for granted assumptions about how society is structured. It helps reveal where and how power is located and what the implications of this are for the way society

functions. By making apparent these assumptions the ultimate aim of CDA is to raise awareness about alternative ways of doing and create the potential to do things differently (Fairclough, 2003).

I have found Foucault's perspective on discourse useful because of the way it illuminates the complex nature of discourse and the web of influences which both produce and constrain it. He therefore offers a framework for reflecting upon the complexities of practitioners' discourses and the forces which have interacted to produce them. According to Foucault discourse plays a key part in how people construct the world they live in. He argues it does this by shaping our perceptions of the world and helping us to make sense of it. Foucault (1970:55) identified 'three great systems of exclusion which forge discourse'. He referred to these as 'the forbidden speech, the division of madness and the will to truth' (ibid). He also identified other procedures which have the function of 'controlling and delimiting discourse' (1970:56). In other words they are concerned with distinguishing who is and who is not 'authorised to speak' and 'those discourses which are authorised and those which are not' (Mills, 2003:59).

When explaining the 'systems of exclusion' Foucault (1970) said that there are things in a culture which it is forbidden to speak about. He illustrated by using the example of topics like death or sexuality. He argued that the taboo around certain subjects such as these place constraints on what can be talked about. Meeting agenda, for example, operate in this way, determining what can be talked about at a meeting. Items not included on an agendum are excluded as topics for discussion however relevant to the meeting theme they might seem.

Not only did Foucault think that there are constraints placed on what can be discussed but also on who should be listened to and who should not. Foucault (1977) illustrated by describing how those considered mad or insane in a society often have their voices over-ruled or completely ignored as if they do not exist. Some voices therefore are more highly valued than others in a culture.

When Foucault (1970:55) refers to the 'will to truth' he is referring to his view that in any culture forces act which give ownership of the 'truth' to those who are in

power. Foucault (1970) argued that truth should not be seen as self evident and that a complex range of institutions act together to control what is characterised as true and circulated as truth. He also said that these same institutions act to exclude contrary perspectives.

Foucault (1970) identified four mechanisms for 'controlling and delimiting' discourse. The first he called 'commentary' in other words writing about what someone else has said. He argued for example that authoritative narratives are often appropriated and interpreted in ways that were neither explicit nor necessarily intended in the original text. These interpretations, however, assume authority by virtue of their link to the original. He described how every society has its own 'major narratives' that are 'recounted, repeated and varied'. He suggests that a process of interpretation and reinterpretation of authoritative texts (he cites religious and juridical texts as examples) 'allows us to say something other than the text itself, but on condition that it is this text itself which is said, and in a sense completed' (1970:58).

The second of these mechanisms he identified is the 'author - function'. What Foucault is referring to is not who has written or produced a text but rather the sets of beliefs and assumptions that influence its production, circulation and consumption. In a sense what Foucault is highlighting is that any text is a product of its time and ought to be recognised as such. For example my thesis in style and subject matter reflects the mores of academic writing and contemporary personal, professional and political priorities.

The third mechanism is what Foucault calls 'disciplines'. Mills (2003:60) explains that 'disciplines work as a limit on discourse, because they prescribe what can be counted as possible knowledge within a particular subject area'. Foucault (1970) explained that for a proposition to be accepted or recognised as true it first has to conform to the paradigmatic rules of the discipline. Foucault argues that disciplines control discourse because they exclude knowledge that doesn't fit in with the rules for discussing a subject and what is possible to say about the subject.

The final mechanism which Foucault identifies as 'controlling and delimiting' discourse he calls the 'rarefaction of the speaking subject' and relates to who is permitted to speak authoritatively about a subject. In every culture there are rituals and procedures around who is permitted to speak. Mills (2003) illustrates by making reference to the university in which different situations determine who can or cannot speak. In the lecture hall students are not encouraged to speak but in seminars students are expected to engage in dialogue. Equally in terms of current affairs 'authoritative' experts are sought by the media from academia and other validated repositories of knowledge to give comment on matters of public interest. Foucault (1970: 64) argues that in this way there is what he calls 'the social appropriation of discourse'. Foucault however acknowledges the enabling features of education which allow individuals access to discourse, but reminds us that 'Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledge and powers which they carry' (ibid).

I address my research questions in the light of Foucault's analysis of discourse by tracing connections between texts and discursive events; by interrogating some of the beliefs and assumptions that influence the production, circulation and consumption of discourse about literacy and about physical activity; and by exploring the way the 'disciplines' of literacy and physical activity have influenced the production of discourse.

The Discussions

My findings show discourses about adult literacy and physical activity in Scotland are characterised by a set of narratives that are used to story policy and practice. The first of these narratives is about the innate value of literacy and physical activity. The second narrative is that literacy and physical activity are both important because they contribute to individual prosperity and wider economic development. The third narrative is that individuals hold the key responsibility for their own learning and health and the state's role is as an enabler allowing individuals, given the appropriate advice and support, to assume responsibility for these things.

The first narrative takes for granted the benefits of literacy and physical activity. The merit of each is assumed. Improving literacy skills was described as important because it would ensure that 'everyone has the skills to lead fulfilling lives and play a full part in family and community life' (Scottish Government, 2001:7). In 2003 in the introduction to 'Lets Make Scotland More Active' it was asserted that 'People in Scotland will enjoy the benefits of having a physically active life' (Scottish Executive, 2003:10). Unsurprisingly, practitioners in my research concurred with these statements and also were unanimous in the view that provision played a positive role in addressing social exclusion.

Practitioners demonstrated their belief in the merit of literacy and physical activity through the stories they told. George, for example, explained how a young woman he worked with had been encouraged with her child to borrow books from the library and read together. Chloe described how an older woman whom she supported 'just loves the fact that she is telling her grandchildren what she's doing, that *I'm going to a gym*'. Helen talked about a group of learners who had decided to read some Shakespeare and write about it. Alistair described the pleasure that some people, with disabilities, experienced bouncing on trampolines. These examples reflect some of the values practitioners held and the social norms to which they subscribed.

The second narrative emphasises the instrumentality of literacy and physical activity in achieving political goals. It is underpinned by assumptions about how society is, or ought to be, organised according to neo-liberal economic orthodoxies. So policy has made links between 'sustainable economic growth' and 'improving levels of adult literacy' (Scottish Government, 2010c) and increased levels of physical activity (Scottish Government, 2008e). 'Securing a competitive economy' is associated with improved literacy skills and links have been asserted between health and employment: (Scottish Government, 2008b:4).

The third narrative is closely linked to the first and second in that it assumes the merit of literacy and physical activity and the accrual of individual and wider societal benefits through acquisition of skills and raised levels of activity. Its focus, however, is on the responsibility of the individual to acquire skills and to be active and consequently to develop the resilience and resources to cope more effectively with

the demands of everyday life. Recently the Scottish Government made its interpretation of the meaning of resilience clear. It stated that 'Resilience is defined as the capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure and identity' (Scottish Government, 2012:3) and it was regarded as an important aspect of 'Maintaining the continuity of our way of life or returning to relative normality after any disruptive event' (ibid). Statements such as this provide insight into the perceived role of individuals in society and where the onus for change lies in countering social exclusion.

In the series of discussions that follow I highlight the strength of the economic and instrumentalist narratives which are characteristic of most literacy and physical activity practitioners discourses and I do this with reference to the typology of social exclusion proposed by Levitas (2005). I also suggest some factors which may account for the differences between literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses and the relative uniformity of the discursive practices of literacy practitioners when compared to physical activity practitioners. Finally I discuss the emphasis both sets of practitioners place on confidence building as a key contribution literacy and physical activity make to addressing social exclusion. I also refer to practitioners' understandings of evaluation and suggest that both are illustrative of the dominance of individualistic and neo-liberal perspectives in approaches to social exclusion.

Discussion 1 - Characterisation and Interpretation of Social Exclusion in Practitioners Discourses

In my research practitioner's narratives about social exclusion encapsulate a range of competing discourses. These discourses reflect different ideological and philosophical standpoints and show that certain perspectives have ascendancy over others. In particular an individualist economic discourse is, from a Foucauldian perspective, accepted as being 'in the true' (Foucault, 1970:61) and is rarely challenged. This is evident in practitioners' descriptions and analysis of social exclusion and the way in which it is characterised.

Levitas (2005) identified three discourses of social exclusion in the UK. She argued that social policy in the UK was characterised by a social integrationist discourse (SID) which emphasised paid employment as pivotal for social inclusion. She also pointed out that two other discourses of social exclusion could be identified in policy, redistributive (RED) and moral underclass (MUD).

My findings broadly mirror this and suggest that SID is the dominant discourse about social exclusion in practitioners' narratives about their practice. In this narrative employment is regarded as being central to normal social life so it functions as an inclusionary force both in its perceived capacity to generate material wealth and as a form of social glue. Employment is therefore seen as something which is central to being a fully functioning member of society. There are other overlapping and sometimes conflicting narratives. For example MUD seems to be included in many practitioners' narratives and RED is also often detectible but tends to characterise practitioner aspirations about practice rather than descriptions of their practice. Whilst RED recognises the reasons for poverty and disadvantage as inherent in the social and economic structures, MUD offers a behaviourist analysis of the causes, locating them principally in individual failure to function effectively as members of society. So, from a RED perspective social exclusion is addressed by making changes to the social and economic infrastructure and from a MUD perspective the solution lies in changing individual behaviour and attitudes.

In this discussion, I argue that SID delimits and constrains the way that practitioners are able to talk about their practice and how it relates to social exclusion. I suggest it has this effect because of the way in which neo-liberal economic perspectives have become established as the 'common sense' of contemporary political and public discourse. SID is in essence a neo-liberal discourse and its ascendancy in the UK and Scottish Government policy discourse is evident. The Scottish government has stated and restated that its purpose and vision is to 'create a more successful country, with opportunities for all' (Scottish Government, 2011:9) and its way of achieving this is 'through increasing sustainable economic growth' (ibid). Central to this 'purpose' is paid employment and it is said by government to be fundamental to achieving economic development and prosperity. Economic development and the

prosperity that results, it is asserted, will achieve greater social justice (Scottish Government, 2007b). This point has been reiterated repeatedly in policy texts, since 2007, through statements like, 'As our greatest asset, ensuring that our people have positive employment prospects is vital if we are to deliver on our ambitions for Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2011b:14). This perspective, it seems, is widely accepted as common sense (Giroux 2011) and as such, employment is regarded as a central tenet of social inclusion, by most practitioners. It is also fair to acknowledge, that pragmatism may also be a factor in the dominance of SID in practitioners' narratives. Access to government funding streams often necessitates alignment with a SID perspective. The following excerpt from the Scottish Government's strategic guidance for post-16 education, illustrates the market orientated direction of policy (Giroux, 2011).

> 16+ Learning Choices is our model for helping young people stay in learning post-16, since this is the best way to ensure their long term employability. It will help build capacity in individuals, families and communities; and will support economic growth in Scotland. Critically, it will help prevent and reduce youth unemployment
> (Scottish Government, 2010:3).

As a paradigm, it seems that SID encapsulates the formally sanctioned rationale for literacy and physical activity provision, in the public sector in Scotland. The Concordat (Scottish Government, 2007c) between Scottish Government and Scottish local authorities, and operationalised in 'Single Outcome Agreements', ensures that provision is driven at local authority level by an outcome - led regime. These local outcomes are linked to the Scottish Government Performance Framework, which 'is directed towards, and contributes to, a single overarching Purpose' (Scottish Government 2007d:43). In this framework the Scottish Government has articulated a view that an economy, driven by individual endeavour, is fundamental to achieving its purpose which is, 'To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing economic sustainable growth' (Scottish Government, 2007d:iv). This is evident in the policy emphasis upon developing stronger links between all types of learning provision and employability. In contemporary policy discourse about

poverty, disadvantage and inequality, there seems little doubt that SID has become embedded as a policy paradigm.

The narratives of practitioners in my research, in the main, corresponded to this policy perspective on social exclusion. They framed their narratives mainly in relation to poverty and described how their provision related in some way to supporting individuals in a process of accessing paid employment. Indeed employment or employment related goals were often identified by practitioners as the intended outcome of provision. These outcomes, however, were often described as long term or quite distant objectives. I am not suggesting that all practitioners accepted employment uncritically as the driver of their practice but what I am suggesting is that because of the strength of the discourse in policy and the way it has perhaps become embedded in wider social discursive practices, employment has become the referent for most practitioners' discourses about provision and social exclusion. The following examples illustrate some of the ways in which this became apparent in my research.

Andrew, a physical activity practitioner, assumed a logical link between his provision and paid employment and thus to the increased social inclusion of individuals. He described a series of hypothetical steps which began with an individual engaging with his provision and as a consequence of health and attitudinal changes becoming more able to engage in normal social activities and ultimately access employment. This instrumental rationale (Giroux, 2011) was a feature of most practitioners' narratives about how their provision related to social exclusion.

Sheila and Moira, for example, emphasised the learner-centred nature of their provision and described how learning was driven by individually defined goals. Both, however, also referred to an 'employability pipeline' and described the individual learners they engaged with as being positioned somewhere on this continuum. This pipeline metaphor which they used suggests a direction of flow in which all learners are moving, or ought to be moving, which is towards employment. Some learners were described as having only a short distance to travel before employment was considered a realistic possibility, while others were seen as being quite distant from the realistic possibility of employment. Learning activities were

designed to reflect this. The point here is that the very idea of an employability pipeline, implies that the ultimate successful outcome of provision is assumed to be employment. This, therefore, is not only an agenda which is grounded in SID but also, one that is potentially contrary to both Sheila and Moira's professed pedagogies of social practice and community development. Sheila did not seem to be aware of the contradictions when she reflected that, provision was 'very much in response to individuals and sometimes groups' and then declared that, local policy objectives 'are not a million miles apart' from what 'people want and what they are looking for themselves'. She added that, 'they don't articulate it in quite the same way but you know when you start to peel back all the bits of the onion you find they're actually looking for things that are very, very similar'. In saying this, Sheila seems to be implying that provision is driven not from a learner centred perspective, but by objectives external to the learner, which is inconsistent with the pedagogic position she had previously described.

Other practitioners similarly appeared to reject the idea of literacy as principally an employment orientated provision but subsequently infer that, employment was the preeminent goal. Liz, for example, thought that some of the best examples of the impact of literacy provision, in relation to social exclusion, were when learners progressed from literacy provision into work. However she had begun by saying that, employment was not a particular driver of provision in her locality and that, she was sceptical about the assumed positive link between paid employment and social inclusion. For example, she was critical of what she saw as the pressure on 'young mothers' to find paid employment. She perceived this as having a negative impact on families and having wider repercussions in terms of social cohesion and individual well-being. This was a view which seemed to echo critical commentaries (Atkinson et al., 1998; Lister, 2004; Levitas, 2005) about the way in which SID ignored or devalued the role of unpaid work in society.

Gregor was critical of there necessarily being a positive link between paid employment, prosperity and social inclusion, which SID assumes. When talking about social exclusion in his locality he said, 'although employment levels may be high income levels may not'. Du Toit (2004a) suggested that employment often acts

to ‘adversely incorporate’ individuals in society because it does little to address chronic poverty. Gregor reflected this perspective by pointing out that in terms of social exclusion, being in work ‘increases social contact’ but ‘it doesn’t fully address questions of poverty’ he added ‘there are quite poor people who are working’.

Levitas (2005:27) pointed out in her analysis of social exclusion discourses in the UK, the reality is that ‘public discourse slides’ between the models she identified. Most practitioners in my research did conform, very closely, to the SID model, but other discourses were discernible in their narratives. Some practitioners advocated approaches to social exclusion which were suggestive of a redistributive discourse (RED). Jennifer, most unambiguously, articulated this perspective and argued for the alleviation of poverty through a more generous benefit and welfare system. She echoed Gregor in commenting upon the limited capacity of a lot of paid work to alleviate poverty. She was also critical of what she described as the increasing polarisation of society, something which Lister (1996) feared would result from a behaviourist analysis of poverty and social exclusion. She was also critical, of what she referred to as, ‘starting to encourage certain lifestyles’, an allusion to the increasingly employment orientated learning provision she perceived to be developing. Other practitioners advocated redistributive approaches as effective in ameliorating social exclusion. Sharon, for example, referred to the importance of covering travel costs and childcare so that individuals could participate in provision. However, the most apparent slide between discourses was in the way that practitioners seemed to move between SID and MUD.

George, a literacy practitioner, provided a good example of how ‘discourse slides’ between models. In his narrative he questioned what he perceived as a social expectation that everyone should be expected to work. He reflected about how realistic this was in the current economic climate and also if perhaps this expectation represented an attempt to impose an externally lead learning agenda, which took no account of individual and cultural differences. He expressed concern because he perceived this to be contrary to the ‘social practice model’ he subscribed to and which, he believed, was enshrined in policy and informed his literacy practices. However despite voicing these concerns, George subsequently advocated an

approach which actively promoted and reinforced a liberal education perspective on provision. An approach which Hamilton (1996:148–149) referred to as, 'literacy as cultural missionary activity'. George suggested that learning be funded by the private sector through philanthropic initiatives and in this way, the 'skills that business want and not the skills that government think business want', could be developed. It is quite difficult to reconcile this with his previous remarks.

Some of his narrative seemed startlingly in contradiction with the 'social practice model' and 'community development approach' he espoused in his literacy practice. A particular example was the references he made to an 'underclass'. He used the term to refer to people he saw as deviating from normative social behaviour saying, 'I hate the term but there is an underclass those who don't know through their educational abilities how to do things, people who don't have a range of skills that society deems as the norm'. Murray (1989) offered an account of poverty and disadvantage which attributed much of it to individual fecklessness and moral impropriety. The term as a descriptor of groups and individuals who are poor and disadvantaged has been criticised by commentators. Jencks (1989:14) was critical of the way the term has 'echoes of the underworld, conjures up sin, or at least unorthodox behaviour'. Lister (1996:12) thought it was unhelpful in understanding poverty because of the 'strong connotations of blame' it carried and how it acts to prevent 'social scientists, politicians and the media' understanding on the one hand 'the structural forces which are pushing more and more people into poverty and on the other the resourcefulness and resilience with which many of these 'victims' respond (Lister 1996:12).

However, the idea of an underclass is one which permeates MUD and the notion that social inclusion involves changing attitudes and behaviours of the socially excluded was evident in other practitioners' narratives. Physical activity practitioners most readily identified that intrinsic to their provision was an agenda to change individual behaviours and attitudes and conform to normative patterns, in which paid employment is central. Sally typically, stressed the importance of changing individual's attitudes to work and emphasised how, in her view, the socially excluded individuals she worked with, frequently did not share what she saw as

normative values regarding paid employment. This was evident in her comment about some of the individuals accessing provision in which she observed that it had 'never occurred to them to get a job'.

David, a physical activity practitioner, described individuals and groups who 'down to attitude and education' were not prepared to participate in the mainstream activities of society. He qualified these remarks with the comment 'maybe that's not the best opinion'. By saying this he was perhaps implying that he was making some sort of moral judgement which might be perceived as inappropriate.

The view of social exclusion, as a consequence of wider disadvantage which arises from multiple factors and not only material poverty (Edwards et al., 2001, Lister, 2004), is also evident in practitioners' discourses. Helen, for example, made reference to ethnicity and lifestyle as factors in social exclusion. Alistair too alluded to lifestyles which did not conform to dominant social patterns. Helen also referred to health issues, in particular poor mental health, and how she perceived this to be a factor in marginalising individuals. Poor health and disabilities were identified by most practitioners as something which prevented individuals from engaging in routine social activities. Moira highlighted learning difficulties experienced by young people in the formal education system as a contributory factor in social exclusion. However, Jennifer pointed out that although these things may contribute they tend mainly to exacerbate the underlying and key issue of poverty.

Writing in 1989, Giroux commented that the 'language of literacy is almost exclusively linked to popular forms of liberal and right-wing discourse' (1989:148). He described these approaches as reducing literacy, 'To either a functional perspective tied to narrowly conceived economic interests or a logic designed to initiate the poor, the underprivileged, and minorities into the ideology of a unitary, dominant cultural tradition'(ibid). He adds that both 'subjugate it [literacy] to the political and pedagogical imperatives of social conformity and domination' (1989:149). Over twenty years later these observations are still relevant and offer a pertinent critique of the instrumental motives which seem to inform policy and practice discourse.

Fernandez-Balboa (1997) similarly links physical activity commenting on the way in which a male white elite perspective continues to dominate. This male white elite perspective is a personification of the liberal right wing discourse to which Giroux refers. Not only is physical activity manifest in discourse in ways that are alien to many people but also it has been requisitioned to secure and maintain dominant social and economic organisation. The Scottish Governments inclusion of 'increase physical activity' in its bank of national performance indicators in 2012 and the way that physical activity is explicitly identified as a tool in economic development illustrates. The Scottish Government stated that by focussing on increasing levels of physical activity 'we will contribute to the Purpose by not only raising healthy life expectancy, but also by increasing the productivity of Scotland's workforce, reducing absenteeism, improving public sector efficiency and increasing participation in the labour market by reducing the number of people on incapacity benefit' (Scottish Government 2012c:web page). The purpose is economic development and increased material prosperity sustaining the neo-liberal hegemony.

Discussion 2 - Differences in Scottish Discourses of Literacy and Physical Activity

In Scotland the economic rationale which underpins literacy provision and physical activity provision has been made explicit (Scottish Executive, 2001, 2003; Scottish Government, 2007a, 2008b, 2008e, 2010c), however approaches in Scottish policy to these two areas of provision has been different. Literacy has enjoyed, until recently, significantly increased government funding and resourcing since 2001. Comparable investment in physical activity provision has not been evident although this may in part be accounted for by the more segmented nature of the sector (Scottish Executive, 2003).

The *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* report (Scottish Executive, 2001:3-4) intended to improve the quality of adult literacy provision in Scotland made several recommendations. The report recommended that 'common approaches' should be adopted to literacy practices in Scotland; that 'the quality of programmes should be improved through a new curriculum framework, a national on-line databank and resource system'; 'that specialist information and advice should be provided to support inclusive and effective provision for all learners'; and 'that a national training strategy should provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers and a new qualification for specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners' should be developed. These recommendations aimed to achieve both quality and consistency in literacy provision across Scotland. Adult literacy curriculum content was not prescribed, however the Scottish Executive's pedagogic perspective was explicit. It endorsed a 'life-long learning approach' (Scottish Executive, 2001:14) later articulated as a 'social practice approach' (Scottish Executive, 2005:5) to literacy provision.

Let's Make Scotland More Active (Scottish Executive, 2003) had the stated goal of ensuring that fifty per cent of adults are meeting the minimum physical activity levels by 2022. It identified four strategic objectives which included developing and maintaining high quality environments which would support inactive people to become active; 'provide accurate and evidence based advice to staff' involved in policy and service delivery; raise awareness and understanding and access to

information about the benefits of physical activity and 'carry out research, monitoring and evaluation'(Scottish Executive, 2003:23-24). However in contrast to the adult literacy strategy *Let's Make Scotland More Active* is vague in how its objectives should be achieved. A national physical activity co-ordinator was appointed and the Physical Activity and Health Alliance (PAHA) was set up, principally as an on-line resource and network to support the physical activity health improvement workforce. However the physical activity strategy was not given the equivalent level of funding or central resourcing which literacy enjoyed.

My findings suggest that one effect of significant investment in adult literacy provision in Scotland has been, to generate uniformity in practitioners' discursive practices. This sort of uniformity was not evident amongst physical activity practitioners and consequently differentiates literacy and physical activity practitioners' narratives about their practice. An assumption, however, that literacy practitioners' discourses are all the same is not supported by my data and my evidence suggests superficial uniformity masks some underlying differences in interpretations and understandings of practice amongst literacy practitioners.

I begin by discussing the apparent similarities in literacy practitioners discourses and reflect on the reasons for these before exploring the differences they mask. I then discuss the more fragmented collection of discourses contained in physical activity practitioners narratives but point out their preoccupation with similar themes.

The greater consistency in literacy practitioners' discourses, which I could not find in physical activity practitioners' narratives, was apparent in the way the former drew upon a common bank of linguistic resources to describe what they did. Most literacy practitioners referenced the Scottish Government definition of literacy when describing their practice and talked about its role in supporting individuals to 'read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners' (Scottish Executive, 2001:7).

They also professed to a common pedagogical approach which they variously referred to as ‘social practices’, ‘the social practice model’ or ‘a social practice approach’ and universally referred to their provision as ‘literacies’.

Physical activity practitioners, in contrast, did not seem to have similar common reference points. My data showed that physical activity practitioners shared themes in common but the treatment they gave these was often quite different. I was not able to detect similarly strong discursive links between policy and practice in physical activity practitioners discourses and this also had the effect of making physical activity practitioners appear less ‘on message’ than literacy practitioners. These differences between literacy and physical activity practitioners may be linked to the differences in the levels of central government policy interest and investment in these areas of provision since 2001. The appearance of uniformity of literacy practitioners discourses however masked underlying differences. Although practitioners often employed similar language to describe their practice the meanings which they attached to it was often different.

Literacy practitioners in my research storied their practice by using the same terms to label what they did and describe how they understood practice. I contend that the endorsement in policy, by the Scottish Executive and latterly the Scottish Government, of the pedagogy of ‘social practice’ has been influential in shaping how practitioners talk about practice. Its reinforcement as the authorised discourse of community based literacy provision in Scotland through practitioner training and project funding has established it in practitioner discourse. Its formal recognition in policy has had the effect of marginalising other discourses. The emergence of the term ‘literacies’, in the repertoire of literacy practice and policy is an example of the way in which the language of social practice has infiltrated discourse.

Literacy as a lifelong learning project was endorsed by the Scottish Executive (2001) and subsequently articulated as a ‘social practice account’ of provision in the Adult Curriculum Framework (Scottish Executive, 2005:13). ‘Social practice’ has subsequently become the paradigm of community based adult literacy provision in Scotland and has been established in practice discourse through a programme of nationwide investment in provision, resources and practitioner training. Its

paradigmatic status has resulted in the discursive marginalisation of other pedagogic perspectives on literacy.

As a theory of literacy, social practice has its antecedents in the emancipatory and transformative community education approaches of Freire (1972). The New Literacies Studies (NLS) movement (Street, 1995; Gee, 2000; Barton et al., 2000; Barton, 2007;) has developed a perspective which represents literacy as a socially situated practice and which draws attention to the exercise of power in conceptualisations of literacy in contemporary society (Tett et al., 2006). In Scotland social practice has been strongly associated with traditions of community based learning (Crowther and Martin, 2010) and with transformative theories of education (Freire, 1972; Mezirow, 1991).

St Clair (2010:159) commented on the 'surprising' influence of Freire, and the 'wide appeal' of his theory in Scotland. Reflecting on the influence of 'social practice in Scotland, Maclachlan (2006:6) commented that 'social practice in policy and practice is an 'ideal' that 'we have embraced, that we aspire to and that we are working towards attaining' and Ackland (2010:6) remarked on the 'rhetorical power' that has made 'the social practice model...difficult to question' in Scotland.

All the practitioners in my study articulated a strong allegiance to 'social practice' as a guiding pedagogy. Sheila was an enthusiastic advocate commenting, 'we have had huge civil servant support for the social practice model I mean we've won an argument there. [They] are convinced that yes this is the approach'. Sheila appeared to be alluding to the involvement of practitioners' in literacy policy development in Scotland (Tett, 2006) and this possibly accounts for the sense of ownership of 'social practice' which she conveyed when describing the approach she used. Interestingly, she also referred to having the 'scope' to 'shape' literacy practice, as something which was clearly valued and seen as being, a strength of the sector. Some literacy practitioners referred to the non-prescriptive content of the Scottish Adult Curriculum Framework and contrasted this favourably with other policy approaches elsewhere in the UK, where the adult curriculum is more prescriptive. There was no evidence in my research that practitioners were resistant to the idea of 'social practice' or of any of them advocating alternative pedagogical approaches. Indeed

Pat's comment suggested that she regarded 'social practice' as a new way of labelling longstanding and established literacy practices. When asked how local literacy provision and practice compared with approaches endorsed in national policy she said

> In terms of social practice absolutely I would pride us in being really quite forward thinking because many of our staff have been in literacies for many years and have been at the forefront of developments and what we discover when we go to national events is that we in many areas of our work are far ahead of other partnerships - because I think the social practice approach was nothing new to most of the workers that we had here.

However despite there being in policy and in practice what appeared to be widespread subscription to a 'social practice approach' to literacy provision in Scotland my findings suggest some variance in how this pedagogical term is understood and applied. Gregor reflected that a 'social practice approach' was often not understood by partner organisations and that thinking about literacy provision continued to be influenced by 'popular remedial models of literacy'. His comment draws attention to contradictions in contemporary policy discourses. On the one hand in policy (Scottish Government, 2010) there is espousal of a social practice approach about literacy which according to Tett (2006:22) 'challenges the dominant skills discourse'. Meanwhile there is a discourse (Scottish Government, 2007, 2010) which emphasises the relationship between individual skills and personal and national prosperity. Hillier (2006:175) asks if there is 'a clear distinction between the social practice approach and the functional literacies approach' and concludes that the distinction lies in the recognition in the social practice approach of 'the power dimension in literacy' (ibid). She suggests a social practice approach recognises and challenges inequalities 'whereas the functionalist approach merely helps people work within the structures' (2006:176). Evidence from my research, suggests that what Scottish policy aims to achieve and the ways that practitioners described what they did imply that provision is very much geared to helping people to 'work within the structures' (ibid).

As an épistèmé of literacy provision my research shows 'social practice' is problematic because it seems to be used loosely by practitioners and in policy to encapsulate diverse ideas and practices. Practitioners in my research used the term 'social practice' to label what they did. But what they did, and how they understood their practice to relate to social exclusion, was not always the same although they often utilised identical language. In my interviews, literacy practitioners often made tacit assumptions which implied a shared and a common understanding of 'social practice'. One way this was conveyed to me was in the assumptions that practitioners made during our interviews. They assumed that I, being a fellow practitioner, would understand the terminology they used but perhaps more tellingly would share their perspective – whatever that was. In most areas of work there is a shared language or jargon and common reference points, however what interested me was that my research showed that practitioners' underlying discourses about their practice were not the same even though they often employed similar language. My findings pointed to differences in ideology and perspectives on teaching and learning. An extreme but illustrative example of this can be seen in the discourses of Jennifer and George. The evidence from their narratives suggested they were positioned at opposite ends of a political spectrum. Jennifer argued in favour of redistributive policies to address poverty and social exclusion, while George suggested a paternalistic and entrepreneurial approach in dealing with these things. Jennifer identified the main causes of disadvantage as being inherent in the capitalist system, while George identified the causes as emanating primarily from the individual's inability to cope with the demands of contemporary society. However both characterised their literacy practice as 'social practice'. George for example was very explicit saying he used the 'social practice model' in his literacy work. Both drew on a common vocabulary to describe their practice.

Practitioners' narratives included descriptions of engagement with individuals who 'lacked' the skills to operate effectively in society and who have 'failed' to achieve qualifications. Most learners were characterised as vulnerable, often out of work or in low paid jobs, and as being poor and disadvantaged. Practitioners often described their practice strategy as being to identify and capitalise on any previous positive informal learning and lived events these learners might have experienced and use

these to positively orientate individuals towards learning about and acquiring dominant literacy practices. Individuals, who had been marginalised by formal learning and curriculum driven methods of delivery, were seen as perhaps more likely to be ready to learn and thus more likely to be successful if these approaches were implemented. For example, Moira and Sharon spoke at length about the centrality of building relationships with learners and how they considered this contributed to developing confidence, encouraging behavioural change and ultimately to promoting social inclusion.

So, in my research there was some evidence to suggest that practitioners interpreted the 'social practice approach' or 'model' as an alternative or more effective teaching tool in comparison to formal classroom based practices. In this way they represented the term as encapsulating an array of 'learner centred', 'informal' and 'contextualised' approaches to learning and teaching which placed an emphasis on emotional and relationship aspects of learning.

The word 'model' used in conjunction with 'social practice' was also revealing. Ackland (2010) points out that 'social practices theory is primarily a theory of literacies in society. It is not an educational theory'. So the idea that literacy can be 'taught' using a social practice approach (Scottish Government, 2010c) or staff be described as having 'applied effectively the social practice model' (HMIE, 2010) is anachronistic. However 'social practice model' was used by practitioners in my research to imply a way or framework for doing, teaching or learning. Some practitioners in my research, for example George, talked about 'using a social practice model' describing it as 'using a range of methods to engage' and which were designed to help build confidence, self-esteem and relationships. He saw himself 'as having an underlying counselling role'. Revealingly he said 'we also managed to get that individual to join the library and so using the range of methods encouraging reading writing if you like'. Freire (1972) identified practice with these sort of objectives as 'cultural invasion' and Barton (2007:38) distinguished between 'domesticating and empowering' uses of literacy. Either way his views seem to diverge from a 'social practice' analysis of literacy which has an emphasis on issues

of power and the impact it has on privileging some forms of literacy over others (Hamilton et al., 2006).

Different and sometimes contradictory discourses can also be seen in policy texts. The Education Scotland website for example (Education Scotland 2012:2nd para.), described the 'Scottish Approach' as being 'a social practice model, which sees literacies as part of the wider lifelong-learning agenda'. The 'model' is described as recognising 'literacy and numeracy are complex capabilities rather than a simple set of basic skills', and as an approach which recognises the benefits of contextualising learning methods and which embraces negotiated person centred planning and teaching. These are the themes which have been used to characterise adult literacy policy since 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2001; Scottish Government, 2011) and have been widely disseminated across Scotland through practitioner training initiatives. However alongside these is a narrative which reflects a functional and deficit perspective on literacy and which is present in most policy texts (Scottish Executive, 2001; Scottish Government, 2007a; Scottish Government, 2010c). A review of adult literacy practice and provision in Scotland *Improving Adult Literacy in Scotland* (HMIE, 2010) by Her Majesty's Inspector of Education, made reference in the foreword, to 'those who lack literacy skills' and to the 'impact of limited literacy skills' on people's lives. He referred to learner accounts, 'of their embarrassment about their literacy skills...and attempts to hide their weaknesses'. He asserted that, 'Supporting their literacy development is a vital area of work in developing an inclusive society in which everyone can contribute effectively'. These introductory comments illustrate a skills orientated and deficit perspective on adult literacy which the evidence (Scottish Executive, 2001) indicates has been sustained for the last ten years. It also seems to belie the view (Merrifield, 2005:21) that 'the social practices conceptual approach results in goals that are strikingly different from the Skills for Life Strategy'. In fact, the comments by HM Inspector of Education seemed to highlight striking similarities.

Ackland (2010:6) offers some insight and an analysis of why these discrepancies, in the use of the term 'social practice', occur. She suggests that practitioners 'most often use it [social practice] to project pre-existing values of teaching and learning,

such as learner-centredness'. My research showed that practitioners did advocate a learner-centred approach in their practice, which they emphasised was designed to reflect 'how people *use* literacy rather than why other people think they *need* these skills' (Tett, 2006:46). In the literature, the aspect of social practice which distinguishes it from learner-centred approaches and non-formal practices, is the way in which it draws attention to inequalities and power relations in society and draws attention to the inequities (Hillier, 2006). My findings correspond with Ackland's (2010) observations about the way practitioners use the term 'social practice'. They show that practitioners' use of the term 'social practice' is not clearly defined. However at the same time my findings suggest that 'social practice' has become the 'authorised' discourse of literacy provision in Scotland. Practitioners in my research consistently referred to what they did as 'social practice' however the extent to which the theory of social practice is shaping and influencing practice in Scotland is unclear (Hillier, 2006). What is clear however is that the terminology of 'social practice' has become embedded in the discursive repertoire of literacy practitioners, participating in my research. This may reflect the influence of the Scottish Executive and latterly the Scottish Government in promoting 'social practice' in policy and the instigation of a programme of practice development and professional training in the early years of the 21st century.

The Scottish Executive (2001:14) identified a 'lifelong learning approach' as a 'key principle' in literacy provision rejecting a 'deficit' approach which requires adults to acknowledge poor skills and relies on improving skills to a specified minimum standard. A lifelong learning approach was described as requiring 'a non-formal curriculum' that is 'learner-centred and structured to focus explicitly on the uses of literacy and numeracy that adults encounter in real life and the actual skills they require to meet these' (Scottish Executive, 2001:27). Informed by the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland Report (Scottish Executive, 2001) and the Literacies in the Community: resources for practitioners and managers (2000), the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2003:5) described the approach outlined in these previous documents as a 'social practice approach' which 'puts learners at the centre, working to a curriculum negotiated around his or her own uses and contexts for literacy and numeracy, and aims to

promote independence and critical awareness'. The curriculum framework advocated a 'social practice approach' to adult literacy and numeracy learning and was described as 'a reference manual for the whats, hows and whys of literacies learning in Scotland today' (Scottish Executive, 2003:5). Subsequently 'social practice' has been used in policy discourse to denote the pedagogy of literacy provision in Scotland. It has been the foci of tutor introductory training (ITALL) and is a concept central to the professional training programme for practitioners (TQAL). The benchmark statement (Scottish Executive, 2007a) which underpinned the Teaching Qualification in Adult Literacy identified 'learner-centred, critically reflective, social practice approaches to adult literacies learning' as the 'recommended teaching and learning methodologies' in Scotland. In 2010 the Adult literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance (Scottish Government, 2010c) referred to the international recognition the 'learner-centred, social practice approach' in Scotland had attained and reiterated the government's commitment to it emphasising that literacy,

> is most successfully taught using a "social practice" approach. This model of delivery emphasises the importance of a learner-centred approach and personal curriculum. The focus is on how the learner will use the skills, knowledge and understanding of reading, writing and numbers in their everyday lives: with their families, at work, gaining qualifications to progress towards a job, or a better job, and in their communities. However, the social practice approach is about more than contextualising learning to make it more relevant; it is about learners developing capabilities in making decisions, solving problems and expressing ideas and critical opinions about the world
> (Scottish Government, 2010c:7).

Policy and training strategy for practitioners have been instrumental in embedding 'social practice' as the orthodoxy of literacy practice discourse in Scotland. All of the practitioners I interviewed had completed the Introductory Training for Adult Literacies Learning (ITALL) and or attended various training opportunities, or networks facilitated by Learning Connections or latterly the Communities Team at the Scottish Government. The requirement also, to demonstrate a methodological underpinning of 'social practice' in applications for government project funding and in reporting practices have probably also contributed to the way in which 'social

practice' has become established as the 'regime of truth' in practitioner discourse and silenced alternative discourse.

The use of the term 'literacies', as an alternative to 'literacy' or 'literacy and numeracy', to describe provision is also a discursive practice which I contend is evidence of the 'social practice' 'regime of truth' at work in talk about literacy provision amongst the practitioners I interviewed. Barton (2007), writing about the social basis of literacy, argued for the usefulness of the term 'literacies' to distinguish the different literacy practices people draw upon in different domains and events in their lives. His point was to draw attention both to the complexity of literacy practices and the different purposes it serves. Hamilton et al., (2006) illustrate the way in which the concept of 'literacies' draws attention to the way in which different forms of literacy are privileged over others and in doing so makes more apparent the inequitable distribution of power in society.

My analysis of policy texts showed that the term literacies has gradually been introduced. It does not appear in the *Adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland* report (Scottish Executive, 2001) nor was it used in *Skills for Scotland* (Scottish Government (2007). In both these texts 'literacy and numeracy' were the terms used. However in *An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2005) the term literacies appeared in policy for the first time but was used in conjunction and interchangeably with 'literacy and numeracy'. In the foreword to the Curriculum Framework (Scottish Executive, 2005:5) for example reference is made to 'adult literacies learners', 'adult literacies provision' 'adult literacies partnerships' and the 'field of adult literacies'. In the Curriculum Framework 'literacy and numeracy' continued to be used as the main descriptor of provision but it was evident that 'literacies' had entered the policy lexicon. The Curriculum Framework was informed by and builds on *Literacies in the Community: resource for practitioners and managers.* This resource was produced by the *National Development Project – adult literacies* and published by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2000 and it described using the term 'literacies' in order to 'emphasise the dynamic and diverse ways in which adults encounter and use words and numbers in their written form' (Edinburgh City Council, 2000:iv).

By 2010 the term ‘literacies’ had become established as a key policy term and is used as the principle descriptor for provision. In *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020* (Scottish Government, 2010c) the term features frequently throughout the text and ‘literacy and numeracy’ as a descriptor is used much less often. In fact, ‘literacy and numeracy’ is used on twenty different occasions but in contrast, ‘literacies’ is used one hundred and sixty-seven times. An analysis of *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* and *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020,* using WordSmith 5.0, showed that while ‘literacies’ did not feature as a key word in the former, it featured as the most key word in the latter policy guidance, replacing the words ‘literacy’ and ‘numeracy’ (Appendices A5 and A7).

My data showed that most practitioners used the term literacies to describe or refer to the type of provision they delivered or managed, but in doing so, used it as a collective noun to convey the range of different provision that fell within their remit. This included literacy and numeracy and also IT learning. So, although my evidence showed practitioners used the term ‘literacies’ routinely and in preference to terms like ‘literacy and numeracy’, there was no evidence to suggest practitioners, in using ‘literacies’, intended to convey a politicised understanding that Barton (2007) or Hamilton et al., (2006) suggest is implied by a ‘social practice’ analysis of literacy.

So, the evidence from my research indicated that despite the rhetoric of ‘social practice’ having permeated policy and practice, there was little to indicate that a functional approach privileged by employers (Hillier, 2006) does not continue to persist and that ultimately a top down approach ‘where need is defined rather than negotiated’ (Hamilton, 2006:7) continues to characterise provision and can be detected in practitioners narratives. This is not surprising because provision is framed by quite specific policy goals.

The raison d’etre of adult literacy provision and its connection to the ‘purpose’ of the Scottish Government is explicit. Learners may be invited to design a personalised learning plan and identify learning goals (Scottish Executive, 2001; 2005) and experience informal and learner centred provision but these are perhaps to be seen principally as providing efficacious ways of achieving well intentioned but pre-determined social inclusion goals. In reality the parameters for self-determination are

limited by pre-defined criteria which have established what it is that constitutes the nature of learning and success and social inclusion. Freire (1972: 57) describes the educated person, seen from 'a banking notion of consciousness', as one who 'is the adapted person, because she or he is better "fit" for the world'. Levitas (2005), in her analysis of perspectives on social exclusion in the UK, draws attention to the dominance of a social integrationist discourse (SID) in policy. My research suggests that SID is influential in shaping how practitioners approach their practice. Central to SID is the view that employment is a key agent of social inclusion. Hillier (2006) points out that functional literacy is privileged by employers and in the formal education system. In the face of this powerful economic and social framework provision is heavily influenced by dominant literacy narratives and it may be difficult for practitioners to avoid remedial models of literacy. Perhaps as a consequence 'social practice' while it remains an aspiration (Maclachlan, 2006) is little more than a signifier or label for alternative or 'creative ways of reaching those who see no hope or need to extend their present skills, who feel alienated by their previous experience of learning, or fear declaring their need for help' (Scottish Executive, 2001:15) .

In contrast, physical activity practitioners' narratives about practice were different. The features which distinguished literacy practitioners' discursive practices were less evident. In particular, physical activity practitioners did not subscribe to a single pedagogical perspective in the way that literacy practitioners initially appear to do. Evidence of shared terminology and clear discursive links to policy texts were not apparent. There were thematic threads in the narratives of physical activity practitioners but how these were represented in discourse was subject to variation. A few physical activity practitioners did name a pedagogical approach which they said informed their work, referring to using a community development approach to their provision.

The Community Development Exchange described community development as 'a way of working with communities' that recognises the 'wealth of knowledge and experience' which exists in communities and can be used in a way which ultimately 'fosters social inclusion and equality' (CDX, 2011: no page number). The Standards

Council for Community Learning and Development in Scotland (no date) cite *Working and Learning Together* (Scottish Executive, 2004:7) as containing 'a widely accepted definition' of community learning and development of which the defining feature is that,

> Programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants… [CLD's] main aim is to help individuals and communities tackle real issues in their lives through community action and community-based learning.

The idea that work is generated by the issues which people in communities identify as important and not by those which an outside agency wants to address, is central and a crucial tenet of community development work. However Sally and Chloe when describing what they did and how they did it both indicated agenda which had not been generated or even negotiated in dialogue with groups and individuals. Sally described, organising and promoting locally based information campaigns to raise awareness about health issues and to encourage physical activity. Chloe described, knowing what was 'good' for people and employing long term strategies to build people's confidence and trust in her and eventually 'winning them over'. Other physical activity practitioners talked about, demonstrating that physical activity could be enjoyable (Caroline), or that it could be incorporated into daily routines (David). The common theme in all of these comments was a conviction that physical activity was worthwhile and a desire expressed by practitioners, to change individual behaviour. What was absent was a common vocabulary or patterned way of talking about this.

It is probably reasonable to assume that the presence of common themes, in the narratives of physical activity practitioners, are a reflection of the way political priorities and socio-cultural influences have shaped attitudes and have impacted on practitioners' discourses. These themes related to the ways that poverty, disadvantage and inequality impacted on participation in physical activity; to practitioner preoccupation with body shape and size; to their view of organised exercise and sport as unproblematic and physical activity as a good; and to their assiduous approach to changing individual behaviour patterns.

Poor health has been associated with low levels of physical activity and poor diet (WHO, 2004; Scottish Government, 2011). My analysis of practitioners' narratives showed that all practitioners made links between poverty, poor health and physical inactivity. All were aware that individuals encountered a range of barriers often linked to poverty but tended not to represent these as being socially produced (Kawachi et al., 2002; Graham and Kelly, 2004; Whitehead, 2007), but rather located them in relation to individual behaviour traits. Most practitioners described their role as being principally about persuading individuals of the benefits of regular physical activity. Andrew and Alistair, however, differed from other practitioners in that they offered a critique of Scottish Government policy questioning the 'evangelism' of the public sector in assuming to know what is best for people, given the financial and social constraints that people endured. All practitioners seemed to acknowledge that political priorities were influential in shaping and directing their practice. Andrew for example referred to health equalities as 'the language of the moment'. Other practitioners (Chloe, David, Maureen) alluded to the way in which their work was targeted with reference to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and to 'regeneration areas'.

Body image was a theme that occurred in discourses but mostly in female informants' narratives about physical activity. Physical activity practitioners did not problematise the 'healthism' discourse. Instead they often confirmed the view of Macdonald and Lee (2010) that 'healthism' is embedded in the personal beliefs of many physical educators. Chloe (lycra clad) acknowledged the negative impact stereo-type views can have on individuals' willingness to be physically active and made reference to the discouraging impact of 'lycra' clad slim fit images but did not seem to be aware of contradictions between her own embodiment of physical activity and her remarks. Practitioners made associations between physical activity and weight loss and made reference to appearance and body shape and size. Although previous research indicates that the links between physical activity and weight loss are at best tenuous (Gard and Wright, 2001) several practitioners associated weight loss and physical activity in their narratives. Caroline, Maureen and Chloe each recounted stories about women motivated by dissatisfaction about their appearance and weight who engaged in physical activity and lost weight. Their stories reflected

an uncritical acceptance of the connection between physical activity and weight management for which there is little evidence (Bouchard and Blair, 1999). They also reflected research (Zanker and Gard, 2007; Zieff, 2011) that showed practitioners reinforced, rather than challenged, stereo-types of the healthy female body in their provision and practices appearing to subscribe to popular narratives which reinforce gendered and age stereo-types about physical activity, health and fitness.

The focus on sport and organised exercise was also evident in most practitioners' discourses. Although the WHO (2004) was clear that physical activity should not be confused with exercise and this is reinforced in Scottish policy (Scottish Executive, 2003; NHS, 2010) most practitioners articulated their ideas about physical activity provision in terms of encouraging people to participate in sport or organised exercise and confirmed the views of some commentators (Keech, 2003; Penney and Jess, 2004; Evan and Davies, 2010) that some physical educators fail to recognise sport or exercise as culturally problematic.

Some practitioners, David for example, did talk about incorporating physical activity into daily routines such as travelling to work, work breaks and desk based tasks. However the focus of most practitioners was on how to be more effective in engaging people in organised classes or activity programmes (Chloe, Sally, Caroline, Maureen, David and Alistair) and to encourage people to access sport facilities. Although some practitioners seemed to acknowledge that people might be alienated by the thought of sport or organised exercise this did not seem to deter practitioners from referencing sport and other forms of organised activity, as an antidote to poor health and sedentary lifestyles. Changing the mind set of people, so that they were more receptive to sport and exercise, seemed to be a common strategy for practitioners. Maureen for example said, 'they don't like exercise but they don't know the fun of it. My main aim is to make it fun and achievable'.

Alistair and Andrew stood apart from the others in the way they expressed views about participation. They both overtly identified barriers to participation as emanating from socio-cultural and economic factors such as family traditions and poverty, offering these as the principle explanations of inactivity. Andrew, for example, drew attention to the need to address physical inactivity holistically and not

in isolation from wider social and economic factors and he identified that people make rational choices, based on the options available to them. He pointed out that for people living in relative poverty,

> being physically active is not going to be top of their priority lists. And until those other things are addressed, in a holistic way, you know, and their health, it's not just about activity, it's about diet, and it's about all sorts of different things.

Andrew was particular in avoiding a moralising approach to activity and inactivity saying,

> This is [the choices people make] about values you know. What would you rather value six cans of beer and twenty fags or you know a nice healthy meal and a gym membership. That is ultimately the decisions that people are making and what is important to them, given their circumstances. What do they feel is more valuable to them? Is it escapism through that way or escapism through another way?

However Chloe's remarks were in stark contrast (although both Andrew and Chloe worked for the same employer) to Andrew's. She described what she did as 'getting people to engage because I know it is good for them'. She described sometimes 'just having to be prescriptive' in her work and referred to her engagement with people in the communities where she worked as being about 'giving them' her knowledge. She also talked about getting people 'to understand' and 'grasp the reasons' and engage in a 'process of self realisation' which she described as a community development approach. Her certainty about the benefits of physical activity however did not seem to allow for people to make informed and reasoned decisions not to be active in the way Andrew outlined.

Sally likewise seemed to have established, prior to meeting with individuals and groups, what their needs were in relation to health and physical activity. The process of community engagement she described seemed not to be a process of discovery and exploration of needs but rather a process through which individuals and groups come to recognise what she already knew. She pointed out, by way of illustration, that she does not tell people to stop smoking to improve health rather they have to realise this for themselves. Andrew was critical of what he described as this type of public sector

‘evangelism’ but he was alone in articulating this view and unlike other physical activity practitioners he emphasised the need for macro level interventions which would create conditions more conducive to higher levels of participation rather than the current policy and practice focus which he said focussed on micro initiatives around individual behaviour change.

Discussion 3 - Similarities in Scottish Discourses of Literacy and Physical Activity

In the previous discussion my aim was to illustrate differences in the discursive practices of adult physical activity and adult literacy practitioners and to reflect on some of the reasons for these differences. In this discussion my intention is to highlight some of the similarities and consider some of the reasons for these.

All of the practitioners that took part in my research practise, in the public sector and more specifically within a local authority environment. Consequently the work that they do in relation to social exclusion is framed within the Scottish Government's single overarching Purpose and the Single Outcome Agreement which each local authority has signed up to in order to achieve this purpose. Within this framework each local authority has autonomy to identify its own service and spending priorities which will allow each to respond appropriately to achieve the Government's overarching Purpose to achieve an inclusive society which is, 'To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2007:vii).

Economic growth has been identified (Scottish Government, 2007:1) as fundamental to a just and inclusive society and the benefits have been listed as:

- generate greater and more widely shared employment;
- create more highly skilled and better paid jobs;
- provide better quality goods and services and additional choices and opportunities for Scotland's people;
- stimulate higher government revenues supporting better higher quality, public services;
- foster a self-sustaining and ambitious climate of entrepreneurial advance;
- encourage economic activity and investment across Scotland, thereby sharing the benefits of growth;
- bring a culture of confidence and personal empowerment to Scotland; and
- secure a high quality environment today and a sustainable legacy for future generations.

These benefits reflect a neo-liberal perspective on what constitutes a socially inclusive society in which individualism, entrepreneurialism and materialism are

valorised. Underlying this view is the assumption that individual and entrepreneurial endeavour can generate, create, provide, stimulate, foster, bring and secure benefits for the whole population. The list of benefits also illustrates the underlying values and normative behaviours which are assumed to constitute a successful country. These are that people engage in paid employment, consume and have choice in their consumption and develop as self reliant individuals.

The policy language, which outlines the Government's Purpose, masks a strongly libertarian economic agenda. Lankshear and Gee (1995:18) draw attention to the way that neo-liberal texts 'have usurped key terms from the conceptual armament of critical pedagogy and critical literacy'. The use of the term empowerment by the Scottish Government is one example of this. Empowerment used in a critical sense implies a notion of transformative power but Lankshear and Gee (1995:8) question the degree of power people really have if they 'cannot question the 'vision, values, ends and goals of the new work order' in which people are being empowered to participate. Equally the sort of social inclusion implied in this liberal framework is one that requires those on the margins to realign with, subscribe to or accept this vision. In other words the emphasis is upon changing individuals so that they fit, which leaves the social and economic framework from which they have been excluded or relegated to its margins, unquestioned and intact.

In the following discussion I illustrate the pernicious influence of this neo-liberal discourse in shaping literacy and physical activity practitioners' narratives about social exclusion. I use the examples of practitioners' narratives about confidence building in their work, the metaphors practitioners use and the criteria they employ to evaluate their practice. These examples together with practitioners tendency to articulate their practice around promoting social inclusion (rather than addressing social exclusion) illustrates how provision does not confront the root causes of poverty and disadvantage and instead focuses upon ameliorating the symptoms.

Adult literacy and physical activity practitioners talked about the ways in which each kind of provision promoted social inclusion. My findings suggested that some practitioners possibly viewed social exclusion as an inevitable, although unintended, consequence of capitalism. One practitioner offered a critique of the prevailing

economic and social structures but most seemed simply to acknowledge these as the framework in which they operated. Promoting social inclusion as a modus operandi is premised on tacit acceptance of social exclusion as a feature of contemporary economic and social structures (Lister, 2004). Talk of social exclusion without interrogating the causes invites questions about the type and nature of social inclusion that is being promoted. Gregor (literacy practitioner) acknowledged that social inclusion as a policy objective does not necessarily address poverty and perhaps give rise to what Hickey and Du Toit (2007) refer to as adverse incorporation where people may be in work and earning a wage but at the same time experience chronic poverty.

Social inclusion too, as a policy goal is very dependent upon the 'container' metaphor of society (Koller and Davidson, 2008) in which the included majority are perceived to exist in an unproblematic way within its boundaries. Meanwhile the excluded minority remain problematically on the outside because of their failure to assimilate. According to Koller and Davidson (2008:308) 'Envisaging society as bounded space orientates thought in terms of who or what is 'inside' and who or what is 'outside''. The 'inclusion/exclusion metaphor', they argue, problematises the outside while the inside, where the majority of society exist, 'will always be positively connotated'. This, they suggest, gives rise to a mental model for dealing with the problem of social exclusion which is about moving those on the outside of society into the inside. The impact of this mental model is that it glosses over the diversity and inequalities in the included space (Levitas, 2005; Judge, 1995; Byrne, 2005). Koller and Davidson (2008:309) point out that these 'effects' 'can be construed as having an ideological function' because they 'serve the interests of governing parties'.

According to this 'container' metaphor, interventions to deal with social exclusion are therefore envisaged as being about moving people across the boundaries of the container (Levitas, 2005) from the outside to the inside. The problem is that in applying this metaphor the questions about why individuals should find themselves on the outside, periphery or margins of society in the first place are avoided and confrontation of the forces that have acted to produce insiders and outsiders in the

first place does not happen. What it does do, however, is reduce analysis of social exclusion/social inclusion to a dichotomous issue solved through strategies designed to move individuals into the unproblematic container which is society. This perspective is evidenced in practitioners' narratives and the various linked metaphors they employed to talk about their practice and understanding of how it related to social exclusion.

Language used by both physical activity and literacy practitioners to talk about socially excluded groups and individuals contained references to 'hard to reach' groups or the 'territorialism' of young people. Both allude to these as barriers preventing individuals from 'accessing services' and both reference the container metaphor. They imply individual culpability for what has happened or what is happening to exclude people from mainstream society. Vertical analogies such as 'being dragged down' or conversely 'a first step back on the ladder' have connotations of higher ground and a better place. These are also conceived in relation to the container metaphor and also emphasise individual agency or lack of it in the inclusionary/exclusionary process. Use of expressions such as 'chaotic life-styles' or 'underclass' assume divergence from normative and presumably desirable behaviour and these too are premised on 'society as a 'bounded space'(Koller and Davidson, 2008).

Use of this conceptual metaphor and associated terminology therefore shapes and constrains ways of thinking and acting about social exclusion into strategies targeted at individuals and designed to support them to change behaviour, adapt and thus become a better fit for society. Whilst some practitioners attributed lack of confidence to the impact of exclusionary processes, most seemed to interpret it as a contributory factor which leads to social exclusion. In other words addressing lack of confidence and the building of individual self esteem was seen as a fundamental way that provision could promote social inclusion.

Most practitioners talked emphatically (Brookfield, 2005) about the links between enhanced self confidence and increased capacity of individuals to participate in normal social and economic activities and the benefits that accrued. Discourses about confidence building contained both explicit and implicit deficit constructions of

learners. Learners were construed sympathetically but as vulnerable and as lacking attributes such as literacy skills, active life style or good health. Confidence building work therefore was primarily presented as a method of supporting people to become a 'better "fit" for the world' (Freire, 1972:57) they inhabit. Consequently, practitioners in my research articulated confidence building either directly or indirectly to adults gaining a 'passport' into society and the way they were perceived to achieve this was primarily through paid employment.

In policy lack of confidence and low self-esteem are associated with poor functional literacy skills (Scottish Executive, 2001; Scottish Government, 2010c). Lack of confidence has also been cited as a reason why people lead inactive and sedentary lifestyles (Scottish Executive 2003). Low self-esteem and lack of confidence have been identified as factors which exacerbate social exclusion (James and Nightingale, 2005:4).

Self-esteem has been associated with a sense of efficacy, purpose, responsibility, fulfilment, accountability and belonging (Alexander, 2001). Self-esteem levels are also thought to fluctuate according to the demands and circumstances of life (James and Nightingale 2005). To be confident is defined as 'feeling or showing confidence in oneself or one's abilities or qualities' (Pearsall and Hanks, 2005:363). Confidence is defined as 'the feeling or belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something' (ibid). Confidence has been described as relating to specific situations (Eldred, 2002) and comprising cognitive, performative and emotional elements (Norman and Hyland, 2003). Accordingly a confident individual is someone who is aware of their abilities and knowingly able to do things in given situations. Schuller et al., (2002) suggest that confidence gained in adult learning can be transferred to other areas of individual's lives. James and Nightingale (2005) identified three ways that learning providers interpreted the connection between self-esteem, confidence and adult learning. Building confidence therefore can be seen as a 'tool' for reducing barriers to accessing services and facilities, or as a curriculum subject with an overt focus on personal development or as an embedded practice in teaching and learning as a way of driving up levels of aspiration and achievement.

Clegg and Killeen (2000), in a study of how applicants to the New Opportunities Fund use and understand social exclusion and related terms in funding applications, identified attitude as a key aspect in social exclusion and it was related to matters of self-esteem and disaffection. The development of individual confidence was often cited as the key outcome of proposed projects.

Practitioners in my research identified the development of confidence in individuals as one of the main contributions their provision made in addressing social exclusion or more accurately promoting social inclusion. All of the practitioners said that supporting the development of confidence in individuals was an important aspect of their work. Both literacy and physical activity practitioners identified lack of confidence in individuals as symptomatic of social exclusion and described an important part of their role as being about supporting adults to overcome this deficit.

Confidence or lack of it in individuals was presented by practitioners in two different ways. Firstly it was understood to be a consequence of the experience of social exclusion but individual lack of confidence was mainly described as a factor which contributed to the exclusionary process and acted to prevent an individual participating in the normal activities of society.

George and Moira both reflected upon how exclusion through poverty and unsatisfactory learning environments had damaged the confidence and self esteem of individuals. Miriam and Sharon described how lack of confidence acted as a barrier which prevented individuals from participating in social and economic activities. Miriam described individual confidence and self esteem as a requirement which enabled people to 'take themselves forward'. Sally said that if people felt more confident they were more likely to adopt healthy behaviours. Practitioners therefore talked about building confidence as a way of reducing barriers and as a way in which individuals could be enabled to gain access to mainstream services and facilities.

Literacy practitioners' reflections about confidence convey a view of literacy as a 'problem' which is 'essentially individualised' (Tett and Maclachlan, 2008:670). Most practitioners' narratives about confidence contained characterisations of learners as casualties and represented them as having failed to cope with life in some

way or other. Few practitioners challenged the structures and the systems which caused poverty, disadvantage and exclusion in the first place. Instead these structures and systems appeared to provide a frame of reference for determining what people needed to learn or do to become included citizens and achieve personal advancement. Confidence building was one of the strategies practitioners used to support individuals to build resilience in individuals to cope more effectively with these taken for granted and immutable circumstances.

Similarly, physical activity practitioners often reported that the individuals they encountered lacked confidence to engage in physical activity because they were overweight or embarrassed about their appearance, or thought that sport centres were 'not for people like me' as Maureen reported. Physical activity practitioners rarely challenged stereo-types portrayed in the media about fitness and fatness (Tinning, 2010). Instead practitioners described how they built confidence by supporting individual learners to become more like the 'active' stereo-types. Looked at this way social inclusion work seemed to be mainly understood as being about getting people to conform.

Eldred (2002) drew attention to the situational nature of confidence. Individual levels of confidence may vary according to the situation people find themselves in. Individuals are more confident in familiar situations and less so in unfamiliar environments or dealing with new situations. Feelings of self-esteem are similarly thought to fluctuate, however, lack of confidence and low self-esteem seemed to be used by practitioners as indicative of more general human weakness, frailty and vulnerability which was not limited to the arenas of literacy or physical activity. The idea that learners have 'spiky' profiles (St Clair et al., 2010:3) was not evident in literacy practitioners' discourses. Research carried out by St Clair et al., (2010) indicated that far from lacking the skills required to handle the demands of life most individuals are competent, however, most adults have a literacy profile which contains strengths in some areas and weaknesses in others. Only a very small percentage of the population were identified as lacking the literacy skills required to function effectively in everyday life. This study therefore belied a view of the literacy learner as ineffective and vulnerable. The Scottish Government (2010c:15)

also seemed to endorse this view saying 'Adult literacies learners are not a homogenous group. They have a range of existing literacies capabilities and often complex needs'.

Using an approach which involved examining the collocates of 'confidence' in the interview transcripts and in some of the policy texts I was able to determine that practitioners' narratives focussed on the 'complex needs' or weaknesses and rather less on the 'existing literacies capabilities' and the strengths of learners. Collocates are described as the '*friends* which words typically hang out with' in a text (Scott, 2010:121). In other words they help reveal the contexts in which words are used and the meanings which are attached to them. My purpose in analysing policy texts and interview transcripts in this way was to try to identify any lexical patterns in and between policy texts and interview transcripts which would illuminate the ways in which learners are represented. Confidence was something which, as I have indicated, was a theme in practitioner narratives and was a word which occurred frequently in the transcript data and also quite often in policy texts. My readings of policy texts and transcripts indicated that there was a stylistic difference in how learners were represented. My analysis of the collocates of confidence in policy texts showed the words 'skills', 'self', 'develop', 'community' and 'communities' to be amongst the most frequently associated with confidence and confirmed that policy discourse was usually constructed in a positive way. It tended to focus on the benefits that physical activity or literacy provision could bring as opposed to the disadvantage incurred through lack of these. Analysis however of the practitioner interview transcripts showed the words 'lack', 'self', 'esteem' and 'building' to be amongst the most frequent collocates of confidence and confirmed practitioners' narratives were constructed in a more negative way, with a focus on how lack of confidence blighted individual lives. These contrasting positive and negative discursive perspectives perhaps reflect the typical tenor of government policy which is usually aspirational and designed to achieve ideological goals. Meanwhile practitioners on a daily basis are dealing with the reality of disadvantage and poverty and its impact which can leave people in vulnerable and precarious conditions, hence the more negative constructions in the narratives.

Characterisations of inactive adults by physical activity practitioners also tended to a negative, although sympathetic, portrayal of individuals. Data about adult physical activity levels demonstrate a link between socio-economic status and patterns of physical activity but these also reveal a complex picture (Scottish Government, 2011a). The data in the Scottish Health Survey tell us that educated and wealthy people, as well as those who are disadvantaged and poor, can be inactive. In my research physical activity practitioners mostly portrayed inactive people as vulnerable or lacking in confidence but who given the right support and opportunities could be encouraged to change their behaviour (although most practitioners expressed doubt about the sustainability of the impact of their work). The evidence of the large numbers of middle class and educated people who live very sedentary life-styles also suggests that even in the most privileged and advantageous circumstances people are reluctant to be adequately active. Practitioners' narratives also point to the underlying economic rationale for policy interest in physical activity. Although couched in terms of health and health equality and thus justice and social inclusion, physically inactive, disadvantaged and poor people represent a burden to the economy in a way that educated and wealthy people do not.

Alistair commented that individuals need to have something to be confident about. In saying this he seemed to be arguing that confidence should be seen, not as an abstract and subjective thing but, as something which is consequential upon the skills people have acquired and the respect and recognition they are given by others. Confidence therefore it is implied is dependent both upon individual achievement and wider recognition of that achievement.

In my analysis of policy discourse I noted that the emphasis had shifted in the first seven years of Scottish devolution, from a concentration on eradicating the causes of poverty, to a concern to enable or ensure that individuals were better equipped to deal with the consequences of poverty. This was evident in the Scottish Government's reference to 'empowering people to make a difference to their own lives' and 'developing' the 'resilience' of individuals and families (Scottish Government, 2008a:9). The focus by practitioners on building confidence and self

esteem is perhaps an example of how this shift in policy emphasis has been translated into practice.

Practitioners' reflections about evaluation also conveyed an employment orientated discourse about social inclusion and one which required building individual resilience in the face of an adverse and difficult economic climate. Practitioners were critical of macro-level analyses of their provision in so far as it did not adequately take account of the distance travelled by many individuals in literacy learning and in adopting more active lifestyles. However practitioners did seem to share the underlying assumptions that informed the government's strategic statements (Scottish Government, 2007; 2008a; 2008b).

To an extent practitioners' tendencies to concentrate their analyses of social exclusion at an individual level is a reflection of the nature and type of provision they are delivering and therefore presents tangible evidence of the differences it makes to people's lives. Practitioners 'normalised' paid work in their discourses. It was, however, often presented as being a remote goal for many although recognised as core to social inclusion. Most practitioners tended to describe small and incremental individual achievements as most meaningful to people and having the greatest immediate impact on lives.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed my research findings and addressed the research questions:

- How is social exclusion represented and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

In the discussions I addressed three narratives which I argue story discourses about literacy and physical activity policy and practice in Scotland. The first two of these narratives represent literacy and physical activity as having innate value and being of importance because of their perceived capacity to contribute to individual prosperity and national economic development. The third emphasises individual responsibility for learning and the achievement of good health. There is some acknowledgement in policy and in practitioners' narratives that macro level factors in society militate against social inclusion and a more equal society, but the tenor of most discourse is that individual endeavour and improved resilience to deal with the demands of life is a pre-requisite for social inclusion.

I have shown that a social integrationist discourse (SID) (Levitas, 2005) predominates in the ways most practitioners represent and interpret social exclusion. I illustrated this by showing how paid employment is central to literacy practitioners' narratives about practice and the tendency for physical activity practitioners to promote certain lifestyles and advocate more conformist behaviour in their narratives about physical activity.

Differences in the discourses of adult literacy and physical activity practitioners were evident in my findings. Adult literacy practitioners' discourses were more uniform than those of adult physical activity practitioners. In my discussions I reflected upon some of the reasons for this disparity between these two professional areas of practice. I proposed that greater policy interest and investment in adult literacy provision seems to have resulted in a more distinct, and possibly prescriptive, approach to provision and to have generated this uniformity in practitioners'

discursive practices. Study of these practices indicates, however, that this uniformity is superficial and common vocabularies obscure different pedagogies and philosophical perspectives. Physical activity practitioners, meanwhile, although concerned with common and shared themes, treated these in different and varied ways. I therefore highlighted some of the features of practitioners' discourses and suggested some factors which may have been influential in shaping discourse as well as drawing attention to some of the contradictions in the narratives. I illustrated by making reference to literacy practitioners' use of terms such as 'social practice' and 'literacies' and suggested that the strength of the policy discourse in Scotland about literacy may act to stifle critical debate about its role within the wider economic and social exclusion agenda.

Similarities in the discourses of adult literacy and physical activity practitioners were evident in the way that most practitioners subscribed to a narrative which encapsulated a neo-liberal economic perspective in which individualism, entrepreneurialism and materialism appeared to be valorised. The tendency of both sets of practitioners to focus upon a deficit of confidence in individuals as a feature of social exclusion supported this view. Practitioners' perceptions that literacy and physical activity provision addressed social exclusion principally through the capacity of these to build individual confidence also seemed to confirm this.

The metaphors which practitioners used to talk about social exclusion and their practice, I suggest are further evidence that a social integrationist discourse dominated in practitioners' narratives. It seemed that literacy and physical activity practitioners were similarly constrained in their discourse by the conceptualisation of society as 'bounded space' (Koller and Davidson, 2008). Use of this metaphor implied that the purpose of provision was seen mainly as facilitating the movement of individuals from the margins of society towards the centre. There was little to show that practice interrogated or challenged the nature of social structures and institutions which had precipitated social exclusion in the first place.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Reflections

Introduction

This research explored discourses about social exclusion in adult physical activity and adult literacy policy and practice. It has added to knowledge about literacy and physical activity provision by providing insight to policy and practitioner perspectives on social exclusion. In this concluding discussion I reflect on the purpose of my study and the research process this entailed. I consider the validity of the interpretative perspective that has informed my approach in gathering, analysing and making sense of the data which this study has generated. I draw attention to the assumptions in policy and practitioners' discourses that this research has made explicit and describe why, like Tett (2006) and Hamilton and Pitt (2011), I think practitioners' views are important. I also return to the research questions addressed in each of the preceding chapters and consider the extent to which these have been answered, before finally considering the relevance of my findings for adult literacy and physical activity provision in Scotland and more widely.

An Interpretative Perspective

When introducing the thesis I explained that a catalyst for this study was to gain some insight to the practices and approaches in two different areas of policy and practice which are considered to address social exclusion. I explained that I wanted to do this because of the potential benefits I anticipated for more effective collaborative working practices between and across disciplines if meanings attached to the shared language of social exclusion and provision were made more explicit.

The political agenda of CDA in making explicit the uses of language in furthering ideological projects is emphasised by Fairclough (2003). CDA is, however, no more or less political than other approaches to research and analysis. The difference is that critical discourse analysis is overt in acknowledging the political in every aspect of life. By positioning discourse as something which both shapes and is a product of

socio-historic relationships (Wodak and Meyer, 2001), the effect is to acknowledge its political nature and the forces which act to privilege and value some discourses over others. Seeing discourse in this way makes ethical demands on the researcher to interrogate personal views and recognise and acknowledge one's own role as an active agent in the production and interpretation of data. It also opens up the almost limitless possibilities for making meaning from data with sometimes paralysing effect as every comment or observation potentially offers a range of possible interpretation and meaning.

In Chapter 2 I discussed member resources (Fairclough, 2003) and interpretative repertoire (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and how these functioned in conceptualising how individuals make sense of the world and the production of discourse. In reflecting upon my own role in the research process, an important aspect of that process was recognising and acknowledging the member resources and interpretative repertoire that I drew upon. It was important to do this because of the impact that I perceived these to have in mediating the interview process, on the data that was consequently generated and on my analysis of the data. Even more fundamentally my personal member resources and interpretative repertoire have helped to determine the focus of this project and the reasoning which underpins it. Literacy and physical activity are emotive subjects which are of universal relevance and like the practitioners in my research, my discourse about these is both shaped and constrained by my experiences and the environment in which I have encountered them.

The series of interpretative accounts of my interviews with practitioners, which I presented in Chapter 3, were based on field notes which were recorded during and immediately after meeting each interviewee. They also drew upon the digital recording of each interview. The accounts represent my interpretation of participants' narratives and they contain a short biography of each practitioner. The short biography was included because it seemed important to contextualise practitioners' discourses. These therefore provide a backdrop to their narratives with the intention of illuminating each narrative and giving a pointer to the resources (Fairclough, 2003) that each practitioner drew upon.

Interviewee discourse must be seen as a co-production between interviewee and interviewer (Van den Berg, 2004) and the implication of this is a requirement on the interviewer to reflect upon personal philosophical and ideological perspectives and the impact of these in this type of research. In pursuing the idea of discourse, as a co-production and as a historically and socially situated concept, it seemed appropriate that I too provide a short biography which outlines my professional background, mirroring the type of biographical information I sought from practitioners. This process of reflection was useful in helping to recognise some of the factors and dynamics which influenced my data gathering and my interpretation of texts and narratives. I asked the interviewees to briefly describe their background and professional role and like-wise I have provided a similar account of myself here.

I first became involved in literacy work as a volunteer tutor when my children were very young. At the same time I studied part-time for an MSc in Recreation Policy and Practice. My studies were motivated by a desire to support a route back into an area of work which had occupied me for about twelve years prior to the birth of my sons. Literacy was a new area for me and something my community worker partner suggested I might be interested in. Subsequently I found myself teaching policy and management studies in a university sport and physical education department and employed as a literacy worker in local authority community education. Latterly, I have developed my professional interests in literacy and continue to support young adult literacy learners through local authority provision, but my university teaching activity is now located in a community education department where I have been involved in delivering the Teaching Qualification in Adult Literacy (TQAL) and also a part-time undergraduate programme in professional development for mature students.

My purpose was to gain an insight into literacy and another area of professional practice, physical activity, which are both attributed, in policy, as having the potential to address social exclusion. My experience and interests as a literacy practitioner impacted in different ways on the focus and implementation of this study. It provided me with access to informants and informed my lines of investigation and inquiry. In contrast, my role as a relative outsider in physical

activity created some challenges but also presented opportunities to be curious about areas of practice of which I had little or no direct experience.

Networks, which I had established during my fifteen years of practice, proved useful when gathering information and establishing contact with informants in this study. This was reflected in the relative ease of access to literacy practitioners which I experienced. Gaining access to physical activity practitioners was more challenging since I did not have equivalent knowledge of, or access to, similar physical activity networks in Scotland. Familiarity with literacy and people working in the sector and contrasting lack of familiarity, in respect of physical activity, no doubt impacted both on how I perceived, and was perceived, as a researcher.

Anthropological perspectives on research acknowledge the dynamic role the researcher plays in the research process and the frames (Van den Berg, 2004) which influence how and what is generated. Despite using a similar approach to each interview, conducting each within the framework of an interview guide (Appendix E), it is evident from my field notes and digital recordings that in each interview my relationship with the interviewee was different. These differences can be accounted for in various ways. The insider/outsider roles I inhabited, the professional relationship between interviewer and interviewee and the expert knowledge I was perceived to hold are three possible influences in shaping the dialogical transactions which took place. During the data gathering process, which extended over approximately nine months between the first and last interview, I kept field notes which provided a useful account of the conversations with interviewees prior to and after the more formal recorded interviews. With the interviewees permission I was able to use these notes to supplement the recorded data. The field notes were helpful in drawing attention to some of the variance in my research which perhaps, rather than be regarded as a strength or weakness, ought to be seen as further evidence of the complexity of discourse and the complicated dynamics and balance of power which frame and constrain it.

Reviewing the digital recordings of interviews, for example, suggested that sometimes in assuming my familiarity with the subject matter, interviewees made passing reference to issues anticipating that I would understand and ‘correctly’

interpret their perspective. This happened on several occasions when practitioners made reference to particular pedagogical perspectives such as community development approach and social practice approach. When asked, literacy practitioners sometimes seemed reluctant to spell out what they meant, assuming perhaps, but mistakenly, that there was a definitive meaning and they might get it wrong. Liz, a literacy practitioner and colleague, for example said light heartedly that she felt nervous about doing the interview because it felt like a test. In contrast physical activity practitioners seemed less inhibited and often volunteered explanations about their understanding and use of professional terminology which they assumed might be unfamiliar to me. This may be accounted for in their perspective of me as an outsider and not privy to the knowledge in a way that literacy practitioners assumed I was.

Conceptualising the variability in discourse through the use of interpretative repertoire (Potter and Wetherall, 1987) and frames (Van den Berg, 2004) was a useful device. Interpretative repertoire is helpful in illuminating the switches in the ways interviewees talk about a topic and frame provides an insight into the nature of the social interaction in an interview and the discourse which it generates. My data sometimes revealed inconsistencies within practitioners' discourses to which the idea of interpretative repertoire provided insight. The most obvious examples of practitioners drawing on differing repertoire, were in some literacy practitioners' overt rejection of deficit models of literacy and their simultaneous representations of adult learners as vulnerable and inadequate. Van den Berg (2004) points out 'variability is intrinsic to discourse' and contradictions in narratives, he suggests, are not necessarily evidence of 'cognitive incompetence'. They should instead be seen as the consequence of functional strategies, which ensure positive self-representation and ways of responding appropriately to the social norms and opinions attributed to the interviewer. In the case of my study these contradictions may be understood to reflect the strength of 'social practice' as the authorised discourse of literacy and their affiliation to it but simultaneously, the evidence of their practice is that the people they encounter are disadvantaged and consequently, do feel vulnerable and inadequate.

Physical activity practitioners and literacy practitioners were differentiated in that physical activity practitioners were less likely to shift repertoire. The reasons for this may relate to differences in the way that provision is framed. Physical activity practitioners seemed to be less constrained by a pedagogically prescriptive framework and therefore were not faced with having to resolve contradictions between authorised and popular discourses, in the way that literacy practitioners appeared to be. Physical activity practice discourse was consistent with sport and exercise orientated representations of physical activity and in this respect, conformed to the dominant paradigm of the discipline (Foucault, 1970).

In literacy provision, the appropriation of the language of resistance in policy leaves practitioners weakened to defend alternative stances, since they no longer have ownership of the language they need to do this. In contrast, physical activity provision seems untroubled by these types of tensions. Practitioners' preoccupations were with finding ways to encourage individual behaviour change and not in questioning the validity of the value systems around which physical activity is built as Fernandez – Balboa (1997) suggests should be done.

Hunting Assumptions

It is not reasonable to assume that by making use of the same language, policy makers, practitioners and the public mean the same thing. Sometimes they do but my review of literature and analysis of policy and practitioner discourse suggests otherwise. Ackland (2010) in her research about adult literacy in Scotland has drawn attention to the way in which 'social practice' is used as a descriptor for different sorts of practices. Zanker and Gard (2008) have illustrated how 'physical activity' means different things to different people. Levitas (2005) in her typology distinguished different discourses of social exclusion which uncovered contrasting analyses of the underlying causes of poverty and disadvantage. Lankshear and Gee (1995, 1997) have alerted us to the ways in which language can be manipulated to serve purposes that were not originally intended. They illustrate this by showing the invidious ways in which the language of resistance has been gradually appropriated in

'fast capitalist texts', making it the new language of acquiescence. My findings suggest that the language of social exclusion has served a manipulative function, with the effect of diverting attention from the causes of poverty and disadvantage. A powerful way this has been achieved is through positive constructions of policy action and the widespread use of terms such as 'promoting social inclusion'. The connotation of positive action which 'social inclusion' implies does not encourage the question 'How has it happened in the first place?' Instead the focus is firmly on addressing the symptoms. Since the symptoms are manifest most obviously and felt most acutely in individual lives, addressing these immediate issues often becomes a priority for practitioners. My evidence, which showed that physical activity and literacy practitioners similarly identified building confidence and self-esteem as an important aspect of their work, demonstrates this orientation.

Giroux (2011) makes an impassioned plea for criticality in education practices and the need for practitioners to be alert to and hunt the assumptions (Brookfield 1987) in which everyday life and practice is embedded. He advises that,

> Educators need to cast a critical eye on those forms of knowledge and social relations that define them through a conceptual purity and political innocence that not only cloud how they come into being but also ignore that the alleged neutrality on which they stand is already grounded in ethico-political choices (Giroux 2011:75).

Giroux (2011:72) is passionate in his view that making more visible 'alternative forms of radical democratic relations', is the main task of critical pedagogy. What I have sought to do therefore in this study is contribute to a body of knowledge about literacy and physical activity by making more visible the ways these are implicated in government social policy agenda about social exclusion and how practitioners represent them. I have done this by addressing three research questions

- How is social exclusion conceptualised and represented in policy texts?
- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about exclusion?

In addressing these questions, I have drawn attention to some of the ways in which social exclusion is represented and interpreted and in my discussion, offered some analysis of the characterisation afforded social exclusion and reflected upon similarities and differences in discourse between literacy and physical activity practitioners.

My analysis of policy in Chapter 4 suggested that policy discourse reflects an evolving perspective on social exclusion. It has moved from being represented as an external threat, a consequence of previous mismanagement and questionable ethical policies, to being seen as a phenomenon endemic to the immutable political and economic structures, which frame society. This meant a discursive shift in policy from a discourse of resistance and eradication, to one of acceptance and inevitability but which is centred on building resistance and greater capacity to deal with its debilitating effects. This evolution has seen a more overt subscription in policy to neo-liberal analysis of individual and social well-being, which is understood as being embedded in, and emanating from, economic development and material prosperity. In Chapter 5, I showed the ways in which practitioners characterised social exclusion and demonstrated how paid employment was used as a referent for discourses about social exclusion. My findings were consistent with the view, that discourses about social exclusion are located on a spectrum which extended through redistributive (RED), social integrationist (SID) and moralising (MUD) discourses (Levitas, 2005). There were no significant differences between physical activity and literacy practitioners and their discourses of social exclusion. There was a difference, however, in discourse about practice. Literacy practitioners appeared to operate within an environment in which an authoritative narrative about provision regulated discourse, while physical activity practitioners appeared not to be subject to similar discursive restraints.

In Chapter 6, I suggested that the effect of the appropriation, by government, of the language of social practice and its application in pursuit of neo-liberal objectives, has resulted in practitioners being less empowered to drive forward a radical and progressive learning agenda. This, I contend, is because ownership or control of the language to do it has been diluted, due to being incorporated in mainstream policy

and pedagogical discourse. Whilst endorsement by the Scottish Government of a social practice perspective on literacy should be interpreted as enlightened and innovative, perhaps this move has induced some complacency in practitioners. One practitioner described having won an argument with government, claiming that civil servants were convinced of the pedagogical wisdom of a social practice approach. My study, however, suggests that the distinguishing feature of 'social practice', that 'it recognises the power dimension in literacy' (Hillier 2006:175), is not very evident in policy texts or in practitioners' discourse and that the social practice, that has been enacted in policy and practice, is indistinguishable from a learner centred approach to provision.

Brookfield (1987) and Giroux (2011) both recognise that, the essence of critical thinking is in the refusal to assume that others know what is in our best interests and a resistance to relinquish the power and responsibility, to make our own choices. Brookfield spells out that,

> When we become critical thinkers we develop an awareness of the assumptions under which we, and others, think and act. We learn to pay attention to the context in which our actions and ideas are generated. We become sceptical of quick fix solutions, of single answers to problems, and of claims to universal truth (Brookfield, 1987:ix).

Ironically, the adoption in policy of a 'social practice' approach in Scotland, may have engendered a less critical approach amongst literacy practitioners than previously, based on the idea that an argument has been won and that criticality is now embedded in everyday practices.

However, everyday discourse is a reminder that practitioners should not desist from hunting assumptions (Brookfield, 1987). The 2012 Olympic Games and discourses about legacy are an example. The anticipation that adults and children alike will be inspired to adopt more active lifestyles, in response to the games, brings this point into sharp focus. Media coverage of the Olympics has uncritically represented the benefits of sport but has barely acknowledged the classed nature of participation. The enthusiasm, whipped up by the spectacle of the games, is unlikely to impact significantly on levels of activity in the general population and the evidence from

previous events attest to this (BMJ, 2012:e4207). Watching sport on television is no more likely to induce individuals to engage in physical activity as watching a good play will persuade individuals to take up drama.

Implications of this Research

Giroux (2011:72) proposes that the central task of education is to raise the possibility of alternative forms of democratic relations by raising questions about the distribution of goods and services and what is required to achieve political agency and social change. He argues for education as 'a form of political intervention'(ibid), and he sees educators as key agents in this process. The 'fundamental challenge... within the current age of neo-liberalism'(ibid), he asserts, is for educators to support learners to understand the links between knowledge and power and thus develop the knowledge and skills which will enable them to resist injustice. He suggests that this requires, engaging critically with dominant public discourses and the values that underpin these.

If educators are to do this they must first hunt the assumptions (Brookfield, 1995) that provide the backdrop to their practice and engagement with learners and in a sense this is what this study set out to do. The relevance of this study is that it re-emphasises the importance of continually reinforcing 'the need for educators to rethink the cultural and political baggage they bring to each educational encounter' and 'the images of the future they deem legitimate' (Giroux, 2011:76). Failure to do this runs the risk of reducing education to little more than a reproductive process in which injustices and disadvantage continue to be generated.

Literacy and physical activity provision involve neither benign or neutral processes, each serve political agenda, which in Scotland is framed by the government around a neo-liberal analysis of economic success, individual prosperity and social inclusion. The fact that literacy and physical activity provision serve these purposes is not surprising and indeed to be expected. It would be naive to think otherwise and I am not proposing that this is a situation that can or even ought to be changed. What I do propose is that it is important practitioners have heightened awareness of the potential

in provision to reinforce dominant values, norms and structures in society but even more importantly that there is awareness of its potential to challenge, resist and ultimately dismantle disadvantageous social and economic structures. However, in order to unleash the power of literacy and physical activity provision to enact change, practitioners need first to be aware of the institutional and personal assumptions upon which their practice is based. By hunting the assumptions embedded in their practices practitioners may be better placed to facilitate a type of learning that is empowering and that does promote real choice about how people live their lives.

This thesis has contributed to knowledge in the field by drawing attention to the complexity of practitioners' discourses about social exclusion. It has highlighted both the similarities and differences in practitioners' understandings about the nature and purpose of literacy and physical activity provision, which are often hidden under a common language of policy and practice. The differences in philosophical and pedagogical approaches concealed by this common language imply significant barriers to the achievement of effective intra and inter professional collaboration.

This study suggests the need for a greater clarity about professional purpose. It is proposed that this could be achieved, by supporting practitioners to 'hunt the assumptions' that underpin their practices and the policy frameworks of their working environment. For example, in initial training and through continuing professional development, there should be an emphasis on developing a range of strategies that highlight the fundamental importance of reflective practice in deconstructing the discourses of social exclusion. Further research is required to explore teaching and learning approaches to achieve this.

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Appendix A 1

Keywords – Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland (Scottish Office 1999)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	INCLUSION	46	1.445177555
2	ACTION	48	1.508011341
3	SOCIAL	54	1.696512699
4	SCOTLAND	31	0.973923981
5	EXCLUSION	17	0.53408736
6	NETWORK	21	0.659754932
7	COMMUNITY	22	0.691171825
8	COMMUNITIES	14	0.439836621
9	SCOTTISH	17	0.53408736
10	LOCAL	23	0.722588778
11	PROMOTE	11	0.345585912
12	PARTNERSHIPS	8	0.251335204
13	WILL	44	1.38234365
14	ENSURE	13	0.408419728
15	PLAN	14	0.439836621
16	VISION	10	0.314169019
17	PROMOTING	8	0.251335204
18	POVERTY	9	0.282752126
19	AGENCIES	9	0.282752126
20	FRAMEWORK	9	0.282752126
21	STRATEGY	10	0.314169019
22	PARTICIPATION	8	0.251335204
23	DEVELOP	10	0.314169019
24	TACKLE	7	0.219918311
25	PROGRAMMES	9	0.282752126
26	ORGANISATIONS	8	0.251335204
27	INDIVIDUALS	9	0.282752126
28	TACKLING	5	0.15708451
29	INCLUSIVE	4	0.125667602
30	GOVERNMENT	15	0.471253544
31	INITIATIVES	5	0.15708451
32	AREAS	10	0.314169019
33	YOUNG	11	0.345585912
34	VULNERABLE	5	0.15708451
35	PROGRAMME	9	0.282752126
36	EXCLUDED	5	0.15708451
37	RECOMMENDATIONS	5	0.15708451
38	CONTRIBUTION	6	0.188501418
39	INTEGRATED	5	0.15708451
40	HOUSING	7	0.219918311

Appendix A 2

Keywords – Social Justice …A Scotland where Everyone Matters (Scottish Executive 1999a)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	SCOTLAND	75	1.12934804
2	POVERTY	43	0.647492826
3	TARGETS	37	0.557145
4	MILESTONES	23	0.346333385
5	OUR	88	1.325101614
6	JUSTICE	43	0.647492826
7	WE	132	1.987652421
8	SCOTTISH	37	0.557145
9	SOCIAL	55	0.828188539
10	COMMUNITIES	27	0.406565279
11	PEOPLE	62	0.933594346
12	INJUSTICE	15	0.225869596
13	VISION	18	0.271043509
14	DISADVANTAGED	12	0.180695683
15	OPPORTUNITIES	18	0.271043509
16	EVERY	32	0.481855154
17	DELIVER	14	0.21081163
18	HOUSEHOLDS	13	0.195753649
19	PROPORTION	17	0.255985558
20	TERM	19	0.28610149
21	REDUCING	13	0.195753649
22	WILL	66	0.99382621
23	OLDER	17	0.255985558
24	MATTERS	16	0.240927577
25	NEIGHBOURHOODS	7	0.105405815
26	COMMUNITY	21	0.316217422
27	TACKLING	8	0.120463789
28	EXECUTIVE	14	0.21081163
29	WORK	34	0.511971116
30	UK	17	0.255985558
31	SKILLS	14	0.21081163
32	WORKLESS	4	0.060231894
33	BENEFITING	6	0.090347841
34	WORKING	20	0.301159471
35	FAMILIES	13	0.195753649
36	BUDGETS	8	0.120463789
37	SPENDING	12	0.180695683
38	DELIVERING	7	0.105405815
39	BUDGETARY	6	0.090347841
40	REPORT	18	0.271043509
41	LIVE	15	0.225869596
42	ACTIONS	10	0.150579736

43	INCLUSION	7	0.105405815
44	HEALTH	17	0.255985558
45	TACKLE	8	0.120463789
46	PARTNERSHIP	9	0.135521755
47	HOW	31	0.466797173
48	AREAS	16	0.240927577
49	INCREASING	11	0.165637702
50	YOUNG	18	0.271043509
51	ACCESS	12	0.180695683
52	CHILDREN	20	0.301159471
53	SERVICES	16	0.240927577
54	CHILD	15	0.225869596
55	AND	268	4.035536766
56	GOVERNMENT	22	0.331275403
57	LIVES	11	0.165637702
58	OLDS	5	0.075289868
59	AGENCIES	8	0.120463789
60	WELLBEING	4	0.060231894
61	LIFECYCLE	3	0.045173921
62	TOGETHER	16	0.240927577
63	BARRIERS	6	0.090347841
64	AMBITIOUS	6	0.090347841
65	LEARNING	10	0.150579736
66	PLACES	10	0.150579736
67	OPPORTUNITY	10	0.150579736
68	ACHIEVING	6	0.090347841
69	EMPLOYMENT	10	0.150579736
70	YEAR	22	0.331275403
71	EDUCATION	14	0.21081163
72	ACTION	13	0.195753649
73	ANNUAL	9	0.135521755
74	INCOME	10	0.150579736
75	MEASURE	8	0.120463789
76	MODERNISING	3	0.045173921
77	DEPARTMENTS	7	0.105405815
78	LOCAL	17	0.255985558
79	GENERATION	7	0.105405815
80	BENEFITS	8	0.120463789
81	LIFE	18	0.271043509
82	PROGRESS	8	0.120463789
83	PERSON	12	0.180695683
84	EXPENDITURE	7	0.105405815
85	FAIRNESS	4	0.060231894
86	EVERYONE	9	0.135521755
87	LIVING	10	0.150579736
88	FOCUS	7	0.105405815
89	INITIATIVES	5	0.075289868
90	UNEMPLOYMENT	7	0.105405815
91	HOUSING	8	0.120463789
92	AGE	11	0.165637702

93	EXPENDITURES	3	0.045173921
94	ACHIEVE	7	0.105405815
95	CHARACTERISED	4	0.060231894
96	DEFEATING	3	0.045173921
97	QUALIFICATIONS	5	0.075289868
98	LOCALISED	3	0.045173921
99	VULNERABLE	5	0.075289868
100	PUBLIC	14	0.21081163
101	SET	15	0.225869596
102	BUILD	7	0.105405815
103	DSS	3	0.045173921
104	SETTING	7	0.105405815
105	IMPROVING	5	0.075289868
106	NEW	26	0.391507298
107	BENEFIT	8	0.120463789

Appendix A 3

Keywords – Closing the Opportunity Gap (Scottish Executive 2002)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	GAP	79	0.735431015
2	SCOTLAND	99	0.921616077
3	CLOSING	67	0.62371999
4	OPPORTUNITY	83	0.772668004
5	TARGET	72	0.670266271
6	COMMUNITIES	56	0.521318197
7	SERVICES	60	0.558555186
8	DISADVANTAGED	23	0.214112833
9	SCOTTISH	42	0.390988648
10	PEOPLE	95	0.884379089
11	WE	147	1.368460298
12	OBJECTIVE	31	0.288586855
13	HEALTH	49	0.456153423
14	RURAL	33	0.307205349
15	CRIME	33	0.307205349
16	TARGETS	26	0.242040589
17	GAPS	21	0.195494324
18	JUSTICE	30	0.279277593
19	CHILDREN	50	0.465462685
20	EXECUTIVE	29	0.269968361
21	MILLION	40	0.372370124
22	BY	164	1.526717544
23	SOCIAL	45	0.418916404
24	POVERTY	20	0.186185062
25	OUR	62	0.57717371
26	ARE	144	1.340532541
27	IMPROVE	23	0.214112833
28	REDUCE	23	0.214112833
29	INCREASE	30	0.279277593
30	HELPING	20	0.186185062
31	ACCESS	26	0.242040589
32	TRANSPORT	24	0.22342208
33	CHILDCARE	11	0.102401786
34	TACKLE	16	0.148948058
35	AREAS	32	0.297896117
36	PROVIDE	30	0.279277593
37	EDUCATION	31	0.288586855
38	COMMUNITY	29	0.269968361
39	ANNOUNCEMENTS	10	0.093092531
40	SUPPORT	32	0.297896117

Appendix A 4

Keywords – Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland (Scottish Government 2008a)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	POVERTY	138	1.287553668
2	SCOTLAND	118	1.100951672
3	INCOME	82	0.765068114
4	INEQUALITY	48	0.447844744
5	SCOTTISH	77	0.718417645
6	GOVERNMENT	89	0.83037883
7	OUR	105	0.979660392
8	TACKLE	32	0.298563153
9	FRAMEWORK	36	0.335883558
10	SECTOR	42	0.391864151
11	BENEFITS	39	0.363873869
12	INEQUALITIES	23	0.214592278
13	WILL	135	1.259563327
14	COSLA	14	0.130621389
15	EMPLOYMENT	37	0.345213652
16	TACKLING	20	0.186601982
17	WORK	76	0.709087491
18	PEOPLE	80	0.746407926
19	PARTNERS	25	0.233252466
20	LOCAL	52	0.485165149
21	SUPPORTING	22	0.205262169
22	SUPPORT	43	0.401194245
23	APPROACH	34	0.31722337
24	COMMUNITIES	23	0.214592278
25	POTENTIAL	30	0.279902965
26	COMMUNITY	35	0.326553464
27	PARTNERSHIPS	14	0.130621389
28	OPPORTUNITIES	22	0.205262169
29	DISADVANTAGED	13	0.121291287
30	PROVIDE	33	0.307893276
31	AFFORDABLE	12	0.111961186
32	EMPLOYABILITY	8	0.074640788
33	ACHIEVING	16	0.149281576
34	SOA	6	0.055980593
35	INCREASE	28	0.261242777
36	CREDITS	12	0.111961186

Appendix A 5

Keywords - Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (Scottish Executive 2001)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	LITERACY	258	1.410529733
2	NUMERACY	181	0.989557683
3	LEARNING	228	1.246514678
4	SKILLS	172	0.940353155
5	LEARNERS	106	0.579519987
6	ADULT	104	0.568585634
7	NATIONAL	127	0.694330573
8	TRAINING	95	0.519381106
9	STRATEGY	69	0.377234697
10	LEARNER	41	0.224153951
11	RECOMMENDATION	46	0.251489818
12	PROVIDERS	39	0.213219613
13	DEVELOPMENT	96	0.524848282
14	SCOTTISH	66	0.360833198
15	GUIDANCE	50	0.273358494
16	FUNDING	48	0.262424141
17	EDUCATION	78	0.426439226
18	LITERACIES	18	0.098409057
19	ADULTS	43	0.235088289
20	PRACTITIONERS	36	0.196818113
21	SCOTLAND	56	0.306161493
22	COMMUNITY	68	0.371767551
23	OPPORTUNITIES	45	0.246022627
24	PROGRAMMES	45	0.246022627
25	PROGRESS	47	0.256956965
26	LIFELONG	24	0.131212071
27	SHOULD	115	0.628724515
28	FRAMEWORK	34	0.185883775
29	PATHFINDER	17	0.092941888
30	ENGINE	33	0.180416599
31	EXECUTIVE	37	0.202285275
32	SOLUTIONS	27	0.147613585
33	RESEARCH	55	0.300694317
34	LOW	44	0.240555465
35	VOLUNTARY	28	0.153080747
36	PROVISION	35	0.191350937
37	SCREENING	21	0.114810564
38	TUITION	17	0.092941888
39	ORGANISATIONS	29	0.158547923
40	CONSULTATION	24	0.131212071
41	TARGETS	24	0.131212071
42	STRATEGIES	24	0.131212071

43	PRIORITY	25	0.136679247
44	QUALITY	40	0.218686789
45	IALS	9	0.049204528
46	DEVELOP	32	0.174949422
47	LOCAL	60	0.328030169
48	AWARENESS	24	0.131212071
49	WORKPLACE	17	0.092941888
50	SECTORS	21	0.114810564
51	ASSESSMENT	27	0.147613585
52	NEEDS	39	0.213219613
53	GROUPS	37	0.202285275
54	NEED	56	0.306161493
55	CORE	20	0.109343395
56	VOLUNTEERS	17	0.092941888
57	CHALLENGES	15	0.082007542
58	SPECIALISED	14	0.076540373
59	LEVELS	28	0.153080747
60	SUPPORT	40	0.218686789
61	PROFILING	8	0.043737356
62	REMIT	11	0.060138866
63	PROJECTS	21	0.114810564
64	ICT	6	0.032803018
65	CAPACITY	21	0.114810564
66	INDIVIDUAL	31	0.169482261
67	FORTHCOMING	14	0.076540373
68	ACCOUNTABILITY	13	0.071073204
69	ORDINATING	5	0.027335849
70	SECTOR	22	0.120277733
71	EFFECTIVE	23	0.125744909
72	APPROACHES	16	0.087474711
73	DATABANK	6	0.032803018
74	IDENTIFY	18	0.098409057
75	SPECIALIST	17	0.092941888
76	COURSES	21	0.114810564
77	ORDINATED	5	0.027335849
78	CURRICULUM	18	0.098409057
79	KEY	24	0.131212071
80	COLLEGES	14	0.076540373
81	PROVIDE	30	0.164015085
82	PARTNERSHIPS	10	0.054671697
83	WORKPLACES	7	0.038270187
84	RECOGNISING	10	0.054671697
85	ORDINATORS	4	0.021868678
86	OPTIONS	15	0.082007542
87	FELSTEAD	5	0.027335849
88	RESOURCES	21	0.114810564
89	SURVEY	19	0.103876226
90	THEIR	110	0.601388633
91	MERRIFIELD	4	0.021868678
92	EMPLOYERS	15	0.082007542
93	FURTHER	35	0.191350937
94	PROGRAMME	26	0.142146409

95	NEW	68	0.371767551
96	GOALS	15	0.082007542
97	RAISING	13	0.071073204
98	RECOMMENDATIONS	12	0.065606035
99	ENGAGING	8	0.043737356
100	STAFF	26	0.142146409
101	HEALTH	27	0.147613585
102	LEARNDIRECT	3	0.016401509
103	SQA	3	0.016401509
104	POTENTIAL	19	0.103876226
105	ONGOING	8	0.043737356
106	QUALIFICATIONS	11	0.060138866
107	APPROPRIATE	19	0.103876226
108	REQUIRED	22	0.120277733
109	ABE	5	0.027335849
110	LEVEL	27	0.147613585
111	DEVELOPED	19	0.103876226
112	MATERIALS	15	0.082007542
113	ORDINATE	4	0.021868678
114	LEARN	16	0.087474711
115	AUTHORITIES	19	0.103876226
116	ACTION	24	0.131212071
117	VOLUNTEER	8	0.043737356
118	MODERATE	9	0.049204528
119	EMPLOYABILITY	4	0.021868678
120	PLANS	18	0.098409057
121	WORKFORCE	9	0.049204528
122	ACCREDITATION	6	0.032803018
123	DEVELOPING	14	0.076540373
124	NALA	3	0.016401509
125	ACCESS	17	0.092941888
126	BASIC	17	0.092941888
127	RECOMMEND	9	0.049204528
128	IMPROVING	10	0.054671697
129	POOR	19	0.103876226
130	FOCUSED	9	0.049204528
131	DELIVERY	11	0.060138866
132	PARTICIPATION	10	0.054671697
133	RECOGNISE	11	0.060138866
134	TARGETING	6	0.032803018
135	PRACTICE	20	0.109343395
136	INCLUSIVE	6	0.032803018
137	PROVIDING	14	0.076540373
148	ADVICE	16	0.087474711
139	BUDDIES	4	0.021868678
140	FORMAL	13	0.071073204
141	ACCREDITED	5	0.027335849
142	WITHIN	32	0.174949422
143	ENTERPRISE	11	0.060138866
154	INITIAL	13	0.071073204
155	AUDIT	9	0.049204528
156	PATHFINDERS	4	0.021868678

147	EXPERIENCE	21	0.114810564
148	SKILL	10	0.054671697
159	GATEWAY	6	0.032803018
150	FACTORS	14	0.076540373
151	ORDINATION	5	0.027335849
152	CANADA	9	0.049204528
153	TEACHING	14	0.076540373
154	CONTEXTS	7	0.038270187
155	ROLES	9	0.049204528
156	PROFESSIONAL	15	0.082007542
157	QUALIFICATION	7	0.038270187
158	ACCREDITING	3	0.016401509
159	GLASGOW	10	0.054671697
160	PROJECT	17	0.092941888
161	PEOPLE	53	0.289759994
162	INCLUDE	17	0.092941888
163	COMMUNITIES	10	0.054671697
164	TARGETED	6	0.032803018
165	REQUIRE	12	0.065606035
166	ENSURE	14	0.076540373
167	ATTAINMENT	6	0.032803018
168	ADDITIONAL	12	0.065606035
169	REPORT	22	0.120277733
170	LEARNS	5	0.027335849
171	SECTION	18	0.098409057
172	IMPROVE	11	0.060138866
173	PROFESSIONALISM	5	0.027335849
174	PROVIDED	17	0.092941888
175	INDIVIDUALS	12	0.065606035
176	GROUNDING	4	0.021868678
177	GAIL	4	0.021868678
178	NETWORKS	7	0.038270187
179	DIGITAL	7	0.038270187
180	INCLUSION	6	0.032803018
181	IDENTIFIES	5	0.027335849
182	ONLINE	5	0.027335849
183	APPROACH	16	0.087474711
184	DEVELOPMENTAL	5	0.027335849
185	SUSTAIN	6	0.032803018
186	CENTRED	6	0.032803018
187	AGENCY	10	0.054671697
188	SUPPORTED	10	0.054671697
189	EMPLOYMENT	13	0.071073204
190	DISABILITIES	5	0.027335849
191	WORKERS	15	0.082007542
192	EVIDENCE	18	0.098409057
193	WAYS	15	0.082007542
194	ABILITY	12	0.065606035
195	SPECIFIC	13	0.071073204
196	BARRIERS	6	0.032803018
197	PARTNERSHIP	8	0.043737356
198	SATISFIED	8	0.043737356

199	INFORMAL	7	0.038270187
200	WRITING	13	0.071073204
201	STANDARDS	12	0.065606035
202	RANGE	17	0.092941888
203	OVERSEEN	3	0.016401509
204	HIGHER	15	0.082007542
205	PRISONS	5	0.027335849
206	DELIVERING	5	0.027335849
207	ACHIEVE	10	0.054671697
208	POLICY	19	0.103876226
209	PARTNERS	8	0.043737356

Appendix A 6

Keywords - Skills for Scotland – A Lifelong Skills Strategy (Scottish Government 2007a)

N	Key word	Freq	%
1	SKILLS	219	1.725224495
2	LEARNING	182	1.433748245
3	SCOTLAND	108	0.850795627
4	FOREXAMPLE	26	0.204821169
5	INDIVIDUALS	67	0.527808428
6	EMPLOYERS	58	0.456908762
7	LIFELONG	33	0.25996533
8	PROVIDERS	36	0.283598542
9	STRATEGY	48	0.37813139
10	WE	169	1.33133769
11	SCQF	12	0.094532847
12	UK	47	0.370253652
13	EMPLOYMENT	36	0.283598542
14	DEVELOP	33	0.25996533
15	NEED	62	0.488419712
16	WORK	76	0.598708034
17	DEVELOPMENT	49	0.386009127
18	OUR	74	0.582952559
19	TRAINING	40	0.315109491
20	FUTURESKILLS	8	0.063021898
21	SCOTTISH	31	0.244209856
22	QUALIFICATIONS	21	0.165432483
23	NUMERACY	12	0.094532847
24	VOCATIONAL	17	0.133921534
25	WORKFORCE	18	0.141799271
26	EDUCATION	40	0.315109491
27	WILL	114	0.89806205
28	SUPPORT	42	0.330864966
29	EMPLOYABILITY	9	0.070899636
30	NEEDS	35	0.275720805
31	PUBLICATIONS	18	0.141799271
32	ENSURE	27	0.212698907
33	COLLEGES	18	0.141799271
34	FUNDING	19	0.149677008
35	SKOPE	5	0.039388686
36	WORKPLACE	12	0.094532847
37	LABOUR	32	0.252087593
38	PRODUCTIVITY	14	0.110288322
39	UNIVERSITIES	15	0.118166059
40	DELIVER	14	0.110288322
41	OPPORTUNITIES	18	0.141799271
42	PEOPLE	61	0.480541974
43	ENSURING	13	0.102410585
44	YOUNG	32	0.252087593
45	ICT	5	0.039388686

46	ENCOURAGE	16	0.126043797
47	ASTRATEGYFORIMPROVINGYOUNGPEOPLE	4	0.031510949
48	COMMUNITYLEARNINGANDDEVELOPMENT	4	0.031510949
49	EDUCATIONORTRAINING	4	0.031510949
50	EMPLOYERSANDTHEWIDERECONOMY	4	0.031510949
51	INEVERTHOUGHTIWOULDBELEARNINGNEWSKILLSATMYAGE	4	0.031510949
52	NOTINEMPLOYMENT	4	0.031510949
53	PROFITDRIVEN	4	0.031510949
54	SKILLSANDEMPLOYABILITYPROVISIONFORYOUNGPEOPLEAND+	4	0.031510949
55	THEGLOBALAEROSPACEMARKETISAHIGHLYCOMPETITIVEMARK+	4	0.031510949
56	COMPULSORY	11	0.08665511
57	DEVELOPING	15	0.118166059
58	BODIES	15	0.118166059
59	PROVISION	16	0.126043797
60	HIGHER	20	0.157554746
61	ESTEEM	7	0.055144161
62	EMPLOYMENTORTRAINING	3	0.023633212
63	FUTURESKILLSSCOTLAND	3	0.023633212
64	STEPCHANGE	3	0.023633212
65	WHATOURPARTNERSNEEDTODO	3	0.023633212
66	POST	16	0.126043797
67	ESOL	4	0.031510949
68	FOCUSSED	6	0.047266424
69	MARKET	25	0.196943432
70	OUTCOMES	8	0.063021898
71	EQUALITY	9	0.070899636
72	LEVELS	17	0.133921534
73	IMPROVE	13	0.102410585
74	ENGAGE	8	0.063021898
75	EXCELLENCE	7	0.055144161
76	TRANSITION	9	0.070899636
77	NEET	3	0.023633212
78	LITERACY	7	0.055144161
79	UTILISATION	5	0.039388686
80	EFFECTIVE	14	0.110288322
81	BEHAVIOURS	6	0.047266424
82	EMPLOYER	9	0.070899636
83	OPTIONS	10	0.078777373
84	SELF	10	0.078777373
85	AWARDING	5	0.039388686
86	PARTICIPATION	9	0.070899636
87	LEVEL	21	0.165432483
88	ACHIEVE	12	0.094532847
89	ACHIEVING	8	0.063021898
90	FOR	186	1.465259194
91	ESSENTIAL	13	0.102410585
92	COMMUNITY	19	0.149677008
93	PARTNERSHIPS	6	0.047266424
94	GUIDANCE	9	0.070899636
95	PROGRESSION	6	0.047266424

96	STUC	3	0.023633212
97	AGENDA	8	0.063021898
98	SKILL	9	0.070899636
99	KEY	14	0.110288322
100	TERTIARY	5	0.039388686
101	IMPROVING	8	0.063021898
102	CURRICULUM	10	0.078777373
103	ECONOMIC	18	0.141799271
104	BUILD	11	0.08665511
105	THEIR	71	0.559319377
106	EMPLOYEES	10	0.078777373
107	LINKS	9	0.070899636
108	PROMOTE	8	0.063021898
109	UNIONS	9	0.070899636
110	ANNEX	4	0.031510949
111	JOBCENTRE	3	0.023633212
112	QUALIFICATION	6	0.047266424
113	ECONOMY	12	0.094532847
114	PARTNERSHIP	8	0.063021898
115	PRODUCTIVE	6	0.047266424
116	LEARNERS	5	0.039388686
117	ROBUST	5	0.039388686
118	RECOGNISING	5	0.039388686
119	COMMUNITIES	8	0.063021898
120	ENTERPRISE	8	0.063021898
121	LEARN	10	0.078777373
122	STRUCTURES	8	0.063021898
123	PARITY	4	0.031510949
124	ASPIRATIONS	5	0.039388686
125	INCLUDING	16	0.126043797
126	FACILITATE	5	0.039388686
127	GENDER	6	0.047266424
128	SECTOR	10	0.078777373
129	DEMAND	11	0.08665511
130	INFORMATION	20	0.157554746
131	SIMPLIFYING	3	0.023633212
132	SECTORAL	3	0.023633212
133	CONFIDENCE	9	0.070899636
134	RECOGNISE	7	0.055144161
135	ENGAGEMENT	5	0.039388686
136	CONTINUE	11	0.08665511
137	CHALLENGING	5	0.039388686
138	SECTORS	6	0.047266424
139	RANGE	14	0.110288322
140	FLEXIBLE	6	0.047266424
141	INTEGRATION	6	0.047266424

Appendix A7

Keywords - Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 (Scottish Government 2010c)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	LITERACIES	170	2.174190998
2	LEARNING	143	1.828878403
3	LEARNERS	59	0.754572213
4	ADULT	60	0.767361581
5	SCOTLAND	62	0.792940259
6	LITERACY	32	0.409259498
7	ADULTS	38	0.48599565
8	SKILLS	45	0.575521171
9	NUMERACY	18	0.230208471
10	SCOTTISH	35	0.447627574
11	CAPABILITIES	21	0.268576533
12	LEARNER	18	0.230208471
13	OPPORTUNITIES	27	0.345312715
14	PARTNERSHIPS	17	0.217419103
15	PROVIDERS	17	0.217419103
16	OUTCOMES	16	0.204629749
17	PRACTITIONERS	17	0.217419103
18	GUIDANCE	18	0.230208471
19	HEALTH	31	0.396470129
20	SSAL	6	0.076736152
21	THEIR	81	1.035938144
22	NATIONAL	34	0.434838206
23	ORGANISATIONS	17	0.217419103
24	PROGRESS	19	0.242997825
25	DEVELOPMENT	29	0.370891422
26	CAPABILITY	11	0.140682951
27	LOCAL	33	0.422048867
28	EMPLOYERS	15	0.191840395
29	ENSURE	19	0.242997825
30	OFFENDERS	11	0.140682951
31	EMPLOYABILITY	6	0.076736152
32	NEEDS	23	0.29415527
33	STRATEGIC	13	0.166261673
34	UK	21	0.268576533
35	SUPPORT	26	0.332523346
36	ALNIS	4	0.051157437
37	SCOTPERFORMS	4	0.051157437
38	IMPROVE	15	0.191840395
39	DEVELOP	16	0.204629749
40	IMPROVING	11	0.140682951

Appendix A 8

Keywords – Let's Make Scotland More Active (Scottish Executive 2003)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	PHYSICAL	256	1.549730659
2	ACTIVITY	249	1.507355213
3	ACTIVE	137	0.829348028
4	HEALTH	138	0.835401654
5	INACTIVITY	35	0.211877227
6	ADULTS	58	0.351110846
7	SCOTLAND	76	0.460076272
8	EDUCATION	84	0.508505344
9	SCOTTISH	59	0.357164472
10	INACTIVE	28	0.169501781
11	PEOPLE	126	0.762758017
12	OPPORTUNITIES	38	0.230038136
13	SUPPORT	59	0.357164472
14	LEVELS	42	0.254252672
15	STRATEGIC	28	0.169501781
16	PRIORITIES	25	0.151340887
17	TASK	37	0.22398451
18	SCHOOL	58	0.351110846
19	PHYSICALLY	24	0.145287246
20	COMMUNITY	48	0.290574491
21	ORDINATOR	10	0.060536351
22	CHILDREN	55	0.332949936
23	DEVELOP	31	0.187662691
24	ORDINATION	14	0.084750891
25	RECOMMEND	20	0.121072702
26	FORCE	37	0.22398451
27	EVIDENCE	41	0.248199046
28	ACTIVITIES	33	0.199769959
29	FITNESS	19	0.115019068
30	AGENCIES	23	0.139233604
31	PRIMARY	30	0.181609049
32	SPORTS	23	0.139233604
33	BENEFITS	27	0.163448155
34	SCHOOLS	34	0.2058236
35	PROGRAMME	36	0.217930868
36	PROGRAMMES	25	0.151340887
37	STRATEGY	24	0.145287246
38	CORONARY	13	0.078697257
39	PUPILS	25	0.151340887
40	EXECUTIVE	24	0.145287246

Appendix A 9

Keywords – Five Year Review of LMSMA (NHS 2009a)

N	Key word	Freq.	%
1	PHYSICAL	346	2.202278614
2	ACTIVITY	343	2.18318367
3	LMSMA	87	0.553752124
4	HEALTH	238	1.51486218
5	SCOTLAND	167	1.062949538
6	REVIEW	141	0.897460401
7	SCOTTISH	127	0.808350861
8	NATIONAL	139	0.884730458
9	STRATEGY	87	0.553752124
10	NHS	59	0.375533074
11	ACTIVE	71	0.451912671
12	RECOMMENDATIONS	48	0.305518419
13	KEY	69	0.439182729
14	OBESITY	31	0.197313979
15	PROGRESS	61	0.388262987
16	OUTCOMES	38	0.241868749
17	SPARCOLL	18	0.114569411
18	EVALUATION	41	0.260963649
19	LOCAL	81	0.515562356
20	SHES	13	0.082744576
21	IMPLEMENTATION	33	0.210043922
22	GOVERNMENT	77	0.49010247
23	PROGRAMMES	37	0.235503793
24	SURVEY	39	0.248233721
25	DATA	49	0.31188339
26	NPF	11	0.070014641
27	POLICY	54	0.343708217
28	STRATEGIES	28	0.17821908
29	SPORTSCOTLAND	10	0.063649669
30	WORKFORCE	24	0.152759209
31	IMPROVEMENT	30	0.190949023
32	MONITORING	26	0.165489152
33	ADULTS	27	0.171854109
34	SPORT	29	0.184584051
35	FUNDED	22	0.140029281
36	PLAN	40	0.254598677
37	WELLBEING	14	0.08910954
38	GROUP	57	0.362803131
39	ORGANISATIONS	28	0.17821908
40	PAHA	8	0.050919738

Appendix B

Events Attended

21st October 2008	Physical Activity Policy Review – Regional Event Hosted by Physical Activity and Health alliance Perth Concert Hall, Perth
29th October 2008	Angus Health Improvement Conference NHS Tayside and Angus Council Next Generation, Ethiebeaton Park, Angus

Appendix C – Covering Letter

Dear

Ref: The Role of Literacies and Physical Activity provision (post-16) in reducing social exclusion in Scotland.

I would like to interview you in connection with the above research project. I teach in the department of Physical Education, Sport and Leisure Studies at Edinburgh University and am currently carrying out Doctoral research under the supervision of Lyn Tett, Professor of Community Education and Lifelong Learning, relating to physical activity, adult literacy, social exclusion and discourses about practice.

The purpose of this research is to study practitioners' discourses of social exclusion and adult physical activity or adult literacy provision and how these relate to their practice.

I would like to explore the views of practitioners who have a responsibility for the face to face delivery of literacy or physical activity provision in health board area [names omitted]. I would therefore be pleased if you would give your consent to participate in a short interview (approximately 30 minutes long) by completing the form attached below.

I intend to record our conversation in order to avoid note taking during the interview and because the research is focused upon the language of discourse in literacy and physical activity. However I can assure you that the recording will not be made available to others and that you have the right to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Swinney

Appendix D Consent Form

Research Consent form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project, the details of which are:

Research Project name:	**The Role of Literacies and Physical Activity provision (post-16) in reducing social exclusion in Scotland.**
Name of researcher:	Ann Swinney
Researcher's Contact details:	ann.swinney@education.ed.ac.uk 0131 651 6623
Scope of the project:	The research is designed to find out what practitioners' pedagogical discourses are, and how their practice reflects, or is influenced by, personal and institutional conceptions of social exclusion and consequently what measures of performance are used and valued
Confidentiality and Anonymity	I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

Please complete the following:

I consent to participating in this research project and understand that I may withdraw at any time. YES □ NO □

I consent to the data, as described above, being held for use in the research project detailed above YES □ NO □

Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix E - Interview Guide

1. There isn't universal agreement about the nature and causes of social exclusion.

   How would you define social exclusion?

   How does this council define social exclusion and its causes?

   Has the understanding or definition changed with the new administration as of May 2007 and if so in what way? (locally/nationally)

Ruth Levitas (2007) suggests that understandings of the causes of exclusion and thus the strategies to promote social inclusion in the UK can broadly be categorised as three different but often overlapping discourses. Work and in particular engagement in paid work is an aspect of each but the emphasis is different as follows:

   A. Reduction of social exclusion necessitates addressing poverty

   B. Reduction of social exclusion will be achieved if access to and engagement in paid employment is improved

   C. Reduction of social inclusion requires action to change attitudes of individuals to work and learning

   Which of these best underpins your understanding of social exclusion?

   Which of these best underpins the councils understanding and strategic approach to addressing social exclusion and why do you think this is?

2. What impact has the SOA had on the planning and delivery of services in relation to the social inclusion agenda?

3. How does local adult literacies/physical activity relate to/reflect the local inclusion agenda?

   How would you describe local provision and what are the local priorities that influence it?

4. What form does the local response to the national physical activity/ literacy agenda take?

5. Do you think that local literacies/physical activity provision adequately meets local and national social inclusion objectives and if so how/if not how do they diverge?

   What criteria are used to measure or assess impact/success?

   Can you give me some examples of projects/initiatives?

Social Exclusion/Inclusion Discourses – Definitions from Levitas (2007).

Levitas (2007) points out that 'social exclusion' has 'multiplicity of meanings' and that is why it has been possible for the concept to be adopted across a wide public/political spectrum. She identifies three 'distinct' discourses described as 'ideal types'. Common to them all is that paid work is 'a major factor in social integration'. Each discourse also has a 'moral content' (2007:27). How they differ she argues is in 'what the excluded are seen as lacking' which in simplified form is presented as RED have no money, SID have no work and MUD have no morals.
Levitas refers to Walker's definition of social exclusion as exclusion from the social, economic, political and cultural systems and argues that the discourses of RED, SID and MUD place different emphasis on each of these. However, she argues that 'much public discourse slides between them' evident in political rhetoric and policy.

RED

- It emphasizes poverty as a prime cause of social exclusion
- It implies a reduction of poverty through increases in benefit levels
- It is potentially able to valorize unpaid work
- In positing citizenship as the obverse of exclusion, it goes beyond a minimalist model of inclusion
- In addressing social, political and cultural, as well as economic citizenship, it broadens out into a critique of inequality, which includes, but is not limited to material inequality.
- It focuses on the processes which produce that inequality.
- It implies a radical reduction of inequalities, and a redistribution of resources and of power

MUD

- It presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from the 'mainstream'.
- It focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole society.
- It implies that benefits are bad, rather than good, for their recipients, and encourage 'dependency'.
- Inequalities among the rest of society are ignored.
- It is a gendered discourse, about idle, criminal young men and single mothers.
- Unpaid work is not acknowledged.
- Although dependency on the state is regarded as a problem, personal economic dependency – especially of women and children on men – is not. Indeed, it is seen as a civilizing influence on men.

SID

- It narrows the definition of social exclusion/inclusion to participation in paid work.
- It squeezes out the question of why people who are not employed are consigned to poverty. Consequently, it does not, like RED, imply a reduction of poverty by an increase in benefit levels.
- It obscures the inequalities between paid workers.
- Since women are paid significantly less than men, and are far more likely to be in low-paid jobs, it obscures gender, as well as class, inequalities in the labour market.
- It erases from view the inequality between those owning the bulk of productive property and the working population.
- It is unable to address adequately the question of unpaid work in society.
- Because it ignores unpaid work and its gendered distribution, it implies an increase in women's total work load.
- It undermines the legitimacy of non-participation in paid work

Appendix F

University of Edinburgh

MORAY HOUSE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

Application Form
(This form is for completion electronically)

This form should be used for all research carried out under the auspices of Moray House School of Education. A four-tier system of ethical approval has been developed, administered by the Ethics Sub-committee and the Research Support Office. The levels within the system are explained below. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate which level applies to your research.

All applications should be submitted well in advance of a required date of approval, particularly in the case of Level 3. Applications will normally be processed within 2-4 weeks, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Level 0: If your research project is completely desk-based, i.e. does not involve participants you are not obliged to apply for ethical approval. However, you may find it useful to do so to ensure that you are conforming to confidentiality guidelines. ☐

Level 1: applies to 'straightforward' non-intervention, observational research (e.g. analysis of archived data, classroom observation, use of standardised questionnaires). ☑

Level 2: covers novel procedures or the use of atypical participant groups – usually projects in which ethical issues might require more detailed consideration but were unlikely to prove problematic. ☐

Level 3: applies to research which is potentially problematic in that it may incorporate an inherent physical or emotional risk to participants. ☐

Colleagues are reminded that all researchers working directly with children and other groups as listed in 4.3 in the application form should ensure they have prior Disclosure Scotland clearance (formerly Scottish Criminal Record Office). This is a confidential process and forms are available from hr.hss@ed.ac.uk. Members of staff who have **current** clearance through GTC membership are already covered.

Applicants must indicate their commitment to following the ethical guidelines appropriate to their research (e.g. BERA, BSA, BPS, BASES).

Name...ANN SWINNEY..... **Department** .....

Ethical guidelines followed.....BERA.....

Has your ~~Head of Department~~/Supervisor approved this application Yes/~~No~~

You may find it helpful to copy and paste this symbol
beside the relevant box when answering: 3

SECTION 1: PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 Title of Project The Role of Literacies and Physical Activity provision (post16) in reducing social exclusion in Scotland

1.2 Proposed start date June 2008

1.3 Duration of the project 5 years

1.4 List the following details of the Principal Investigator, and any Co-Investigator(s)

Principal Investigator
Name: Ann Swinney Title: Student (PhD) Department: Education - Moray House School of Education Address: [redacted] Tel: [redacted] Email: [redacted]

Co- Investigator
Name: Title: Department: Address: Tel: Email:

Co-Investigator
Name: Title: Department: Address: Tel: Email:

1.5 If funding is necessary to proceed with the study, has it been secured?

YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A

If YES, give details of the agency/agencies supporting the project. If a funding submission is planned, give details of the agency/agencies to which a funding application(s) has been made.

1.6 Does the project require the approval of any other institution and/or ethics committee?

YES ☐ NO ☒

If YES, give details and indicate the status of the application at each other institution or ethics committee (i.e. submitted, approved, deferred, rejected).

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Please attach a brief description (no more than 500 words) of your proposal. This should include, as appropriate, the aims and objectives of the study, the research question and/or hypothesis to be investigated, details of the sample, and data collection methods.

Adult literacy and adult physical activity provision are two aspects of public policy which are thought to address social exclusion. The focus of this research is to investigate the nature and efficacy of pedagogy in adult literacies and physical activity provision in Scotland in reducing social exclusion. In this research therefore my aim is to find out what practitioners' pedagogical discourses are, how these are influenced by, personal and institutional conceptions of social exclusion, and consequently what measures of performance are used and valued.

Three research questions have been constructed which directly address the subject of this research as follows:

- How is social exclusion conceptualised and represented in policy texts?
- How is social exclusion characterised and interpreted by practitioners?
- What are the similarities and differences in adult literacy and physical activity practitioners' discourses about social exclusion?

The research sample will be drawn from a single health board area in Scotland which covers three local authority jurisdictions. The geographic area identified offers a demographic similar to that of Scotland as a whole and similar population distribution over rural and urban environments. The sample comprises literacies and physical activity managers and practitioners working in local authority settings in this area. The research will be conducted through face to face, semi-structured interviews and will be digitally recorded. The process will comprise two stages. Stage 1 will comprise six interviews with managers with a strategic remit i.e. two from each jurisdiction, respectively with responsibility for physical activity and literacies. Stage 2 will comprise a further twelve semi-structured interviews with practitioners with a provision delivery remit, six from each discipline and evenly distributed across the three local authority jurisdictions.

SECTION 3: POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Could the research induce any psychological stress or discomfort in the particpants?
YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, state the nature of the risk and what measures will be taken to deal with such problems.

3.2 Does the research require any physically invasive or potentially physically harmful procedures? YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, give details and outline procedures to be put in place to deal with potential problems.

3.3 Does the research involve the investigation of any illegal behaviours? YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, give details.

3.4 Is it possible that this research will lead to the disclosure of information about child abuse or neglect?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, indicate the likelihood of such disclosure and your proposed response to this. If there is a real risk of such disclosure triggering an obligation to make a report to Police, Social Work or other authorities, a warning to this effect must be included in the Information and Consent documents.

3.5 Is there any purpose to which the research findings could be put that could adversely affect participants?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, describe the potential risk for participants of this use of the data. Outline any steps that will be taken to protect participants.

3.6 Could this research adversely affect participants in any other way? YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, give details and outline procedures to be put in place to deal with such problems.

3.7 Could this research adversely affect members of particular groups of people?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, describe these possible adverse effects and the protection to be put in place against them.

3.8 Is this research expected to benefit the participants, directly or indirectly?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, give details.

3.9 Will the true purpose of the research be concealed from the participants?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, explain what information will be concealed and why. Will participants be debriefed at the conclusion of the study? If not, why not?

3.10 At any stage in this research could researchers' safety be compromised or could the research induce emotional distress in the researchers?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, to either or both, give details and outline procedures to be out in place to deal with potential problems.

SECTION 4: PARTICIPANTS

4.1 How many participants is it hoped to include in the research? 18

4.2 What criteria will be used in deciding on the inclusion and exclusion of participants in the study? Professional role within relevant organisations.

4.3 Are any of the participants likely to:

be under 16 years of age?		YES ☐	NO ☑
children in the care of a Local Authority?		YES ☐	NO ☑
known to have special educational needs		YES ☐	NO ☑
physically or mentally ill?		YES ☐	NO ☑
vulnerable in other ways		YES ☐	NO ☑
members of a racial or ethnic minority?	NOT KNOWN	YES ☐	NO ☐
unlikely to be proficient in English?		YES ☐	NO ☑
in a client or professional relationship with the researchers?		YES ☑	NO ☐
in a student-teacher relationship with the researchers?		YES ☐	NO ☑
in any other dependent relationship with the researchers?		YES ☐	NO ☑
have difficulty in reading and/or comprehending any printed material distributed as part of the study?		YES ☐	NO ☑

If YES to any of the above, explain and describe the measures that will be used to protect and/or inform participants. – As with all participants confidentiality & anonymity will be protected & ~~informed~~ consent will be obtained.

4.4 How will the sample be recruited? Using a professional network and knowledge of field to contact with managers & practitioners

4.5 Will participants receive any financial or other material benefits because of participation? YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, what benefits will be offered to participants and why?

Before completing Sections 5 & 6 please refer to the University Data Protection Policy to ensure that the relevant conditions relating to the processing of personal data under Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 are satisfied. Details are Available at:

http://www.dataprotection.ed.ac.uk/principles.html
http://www.dataprotection.ed.ac.uk/activities/DPPolicyFINAL.htm

SECTION 5: CONFIDENTIALITY AND HANDLING OF DATA

5.1 Will the research require the collection of personal information from e.g. universities, schools, employers, or other agencies about individuals without their direct consent?

YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, state what information will be sought and why written consent for access to this information will not be obtained from the participants themselves.

5.2 Will any part of the research involving participants be audio/film/video taped or recorded using any other electronic medium?

YES ☑ NO ☐

If YES, what medium is to be used and how will the recordings be used?
Digital Sound Recordings. Raw data for transcription

5.3 Who will have access to the raw data? the researcher only - Ann Swinney

5.4 How will the confidentiality of data, including the identity of participants, be ensured?
Participants will be assigned pseudonyms + data anonymised

5.5 Specify where the datafiles/audio/video tapes, etc. will be retained after the study, how long they will be retained and how they will eventually be disposed of.
Digital audio files will be retained until completion of PhD + then wiped

5.6 How do you intend for the results of the research to be used?
To inform policy + practice development

5.7 Will feedback of findings be given to participants. YES ☑ NO ☐

If YES, how and when will this feedback be provided?
Copies of digital recordings available immediately after interviews + findings made available on completion of data analysis.

SECTION 6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT

6.1 Will written consent be obtained from participants?

YES ☑ NO ☐

If YES, attach a copy of the information sheet and consent forms (covering project details, confidentiality, freedom to withdraw at any stage of the project).

If NO, explain why not.

Administrative consent may be deemed sufficient:

a) for studies where the data collection involves aggregated (not individual) statistical information and where the collection of data presents:

(i) no invasion of privacy;
(ii) no potential social or emotional risks:

b) for studies which focus on the development and evaluation of curriculum materials, resources, guidelines, test items, or programme evaluations rather than the study, observation, and evaluation of individuals.

6.2 Will administrative consent (eg. from a headteacher) be obtained in lieu of participants' consent? YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, explain why individual consent is not considered necessary.

6.3 In the case of minors participating in the research on an individual basis, will the consent or assent of parents be obtained? YES ☐ NO ☐

N/A

If YES, explain how this consent or assent will be obtained.

If NO, give reasons.

6.4 Will the consent or assent (at least verbal) of minors participating in the research on an individual basis be obtained?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, explain how this consent or assent will be obtained.

N/A

If NO, give reasons.

6.5 In the case of participants whose first language is not English, will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, what arrangements will be made? N/A

If NO, give reasons.

6.6 In the case of participants with special educational needs will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, what arrangements will be made? N/A

If NO, give reasons.

SECTION 7: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The University has a draft 'Policy on the Conflict of Interest' (copies available from the Research Support Office). Regarding research the draft states that a conflict of interest would arise in cases where an employee of the University might be

> **" compromising research objectivity or independence in return for financial or non-financial benefit for him/herself or for a relative or friend."**

The draft policy also states that the responsibility for avoiding a conflict of interest, in the first instance, lies with the individual, but that potential conflicts of interest should always be disclosed, normally to the line manager or Head of Department. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest or to cease involvement until the conflict has been resolved may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases could result in dismissal.

7.1 Does your research involve a conflict of interest as outlined above YES ☐ NO ☑

If YES, give details.

N.B. Have you included copies of participants information sheet(s) and consent sheet(s) if appropriate?

Please take time to check through your application to ensure that you have answered all relevant questions.

Electronically completed forms should be submitted to Sandra.Orr@ed.ac.uk Research Support Office, Old Moray House, School of Education

Appendix G Article published in The Herald on 7 April 2012

Fitness czar on track to inspire more active Scots by Robbie Dinwoodie

IF YOU feel you have suffered extremes of temperature in recent days, spare a thought for Scotland's fitness czar, Dr Andrew Murray.

Dr Murray, who was appointed by the Scottish Government, completed an epic, 77-day run from John O'Groats to Southern Morocco – the equivalent of 100 marathons, averaging 34 miles a day – in January, arriving in temperatures of 35ºC (95ºF).

Having recovered from his exertions, which raised money to tackle poverty in Mongolia, Dr Murray takes part today in the North Pole Marathon, running across the frozen Arctic where temperatures can plummet to -30ºC.

The Edinburgh-based locum GP was recruited on a six-month secondment by the Government after returning from Africa to act as the country's Physical Activity Champion. He looks at ways of encouraging people to do more exercise – not just running, but walking, cycling or taking part in team sports.

This is the seventh year of the self-styled "World's Coolest Marathon" and Dr Murray is one of 40 competitors representing 14 nationalities who will have to overcome the extreme sub-zero temperatures to finish 26.2 miles in one of the remotest parts of the planet, running across the ice in the high Arctic Ocean.

Dr Murray, who will also be acting as race doctor, is encouraging Scots to follow his example and get active over the Easter break.

He said: "Getting active and staying active is such an important message, we are taking it to the ends of the earth.

"It's great to hear competitors promoting the value of physical activity at this event. The North Pole Marathon is an experience of a lifetime.

"Whilst running, the views and the shapes of the ice are the best painkillers. What the race encapsulates is the sheer determination of everyone to succeed."

He added: "Remember that everything counts – any form of activity 30 minutes a day will help massively. I urge everyone to get active over the Easter break. Running at the North Pole is similar underfoot to running through bogs in the Highlands – although it's a fair bit colder."

Irishman Richard Donovan is the race director and the first man to run marathons at both the North and South Poles. He said: "This is a truly international event, with at least 18 nationalities taking part. We have had some amazing characters and athletes previously, and this year is no exception.

"It's a genuine challenge, running in temperatures likely to be -30ºC, and running not on land, but the frozen Arctic Ocean. But with determination, and the right training, it is achievable. Keeping active is definitely one of the best ways of keeping healthy, although there are easier ways of going about it than running a marathon at the North Pole."

Sport Minister Shona Robison said: "We want to make Scotland a fitter and healthier nation and I hope that other Scots can be inspired by Dr Murray's example by getting active over the holiday weekend.

"By increasing levels of physical activity we can make serious inroads into tackling some of the serious challenges facing Scotland's population, not least the health implications that arise from being inactive."

One of Dr Murray's first roles as Physical Activity Champion was to launch Take Life On, a campaign to promote the benefits of children participating in 60 minutes of exercise a day.

He said at the time: "Being physically active improves achievement and concentration at school, and also prevents heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and cancer in later life. It is the single best present you can give your children.

"Just 60 minutes of physical activity a day will help your children become healthier, happier adults."